ラーメン一楽
一楽
一楽
みそ

# NARUTO

SHONENJUMP MANGA

Story & Art by

**Masashi Kishimoto**

volume 16

THIS NEXT SCENE, WE'RE SHOOTING YOU LEAPING OFF OF THE BUILDING IN A SINGLE TAKE!
TWEEEET

岸本斉史

Recently, in movies... What?! Film commentary again?! ...But it's pretty much the only thing I can write about... Sorry. So, back to the story...These days, there are usually three performers per character or role. The first is the billed actor (the star). The second is the stunt man. And then there is the CGI stunt man for particularly dangerous scenes or difficult camera shots. They're very well constructed. At this rate, we may even eventually stop needing real actors...

*—Masashi Kishimoto, 2003*

* * *

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

**NARUTO VOL. 16**
**SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition**

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STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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Design/Sean Lee
Editor/Joel Enos

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RATED T FOR TEEN

**PARENTAL ADVISORY**
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.

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SHONEN JUMP
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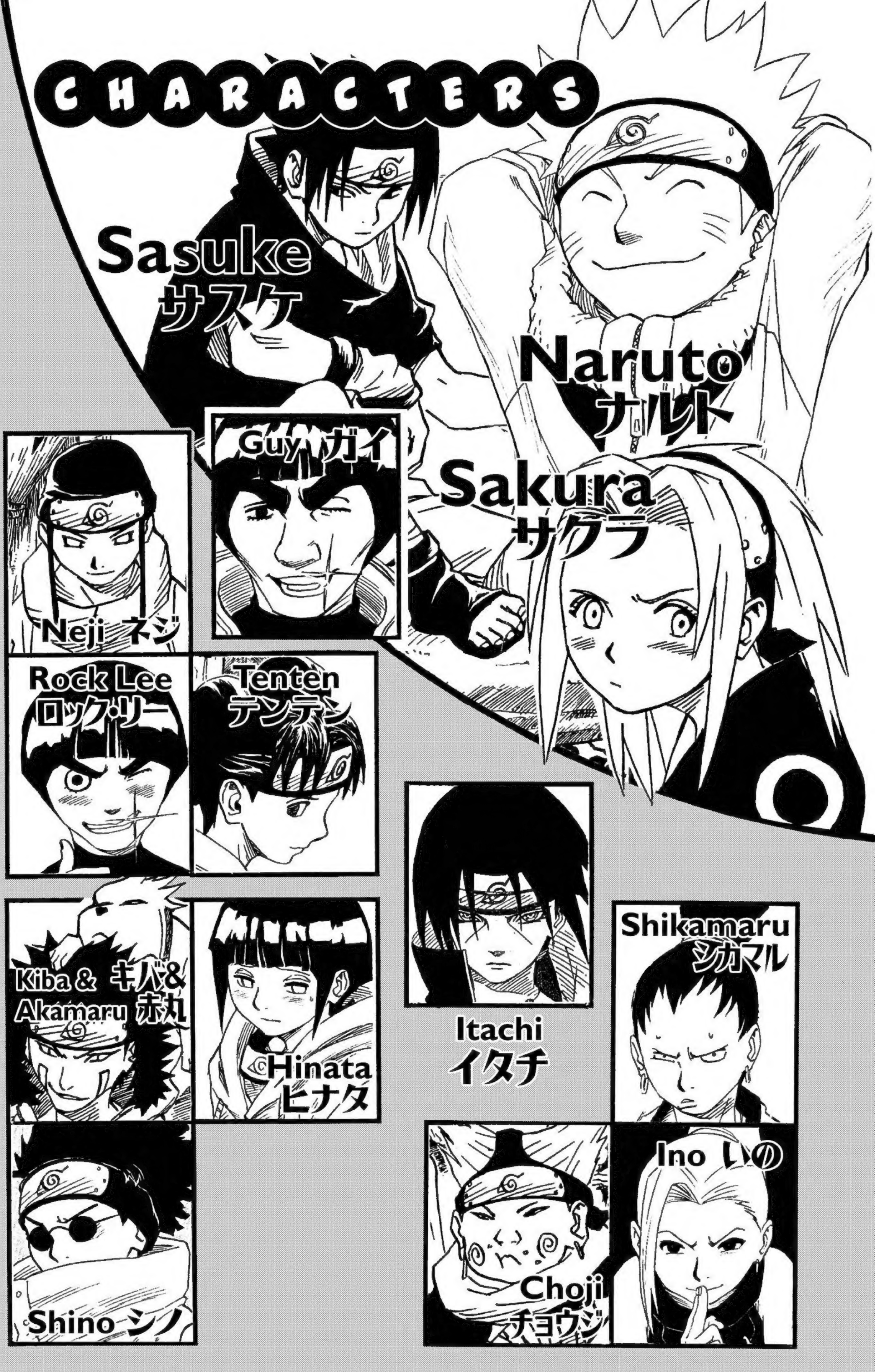
SHONEN JUMP MANGA

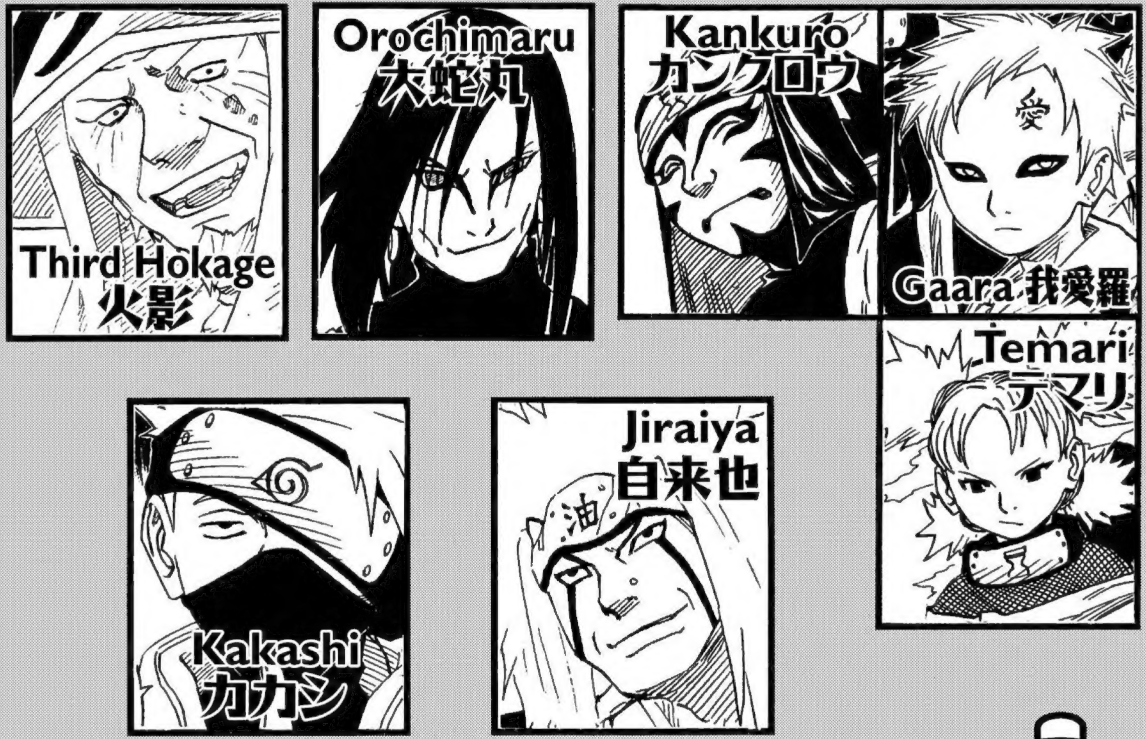
# NARUTO™

## VOL. 16 EULOGY

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

# CHARACTERS


Sasuke サスケ
Naruto ナルト
Sakura サクラ
Guy ガイ
Neji ネジ
Rock Lee ロック・リー
Tenten テンテン
Kiba & Akamaru キバ&赤丸
Hinata ヒナタ
Shino シノ
Itachi イタチ
Shikamaru シカマル
Ino いの
Choji チョウジ


Third Hokage 火影
Orochimaru 大蛇丸
Kankuro カンクロウ
Gaara 我愛羅
Temari テマリ
Kakashi カカシ
Jiraiya 自来也

## The Story So Far…

Twelve years ago a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The Hokage, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to be a ninja-in-training, learning the art of ninjutsu with his teammates Sakura and Sasuke.

Naruto and company take on the Chûnin Selection Exams but suffer a sudden attack from Orochimaru in the Forest of Death. Orochimaru leaves a curse mark on Sasuke's body and vanishes…

During the finals of the Chûnin Exams, Orochimaru, disguised as Kazekage, takes the Hokage hostage and erects a barrier shield. *Operation Destroy Konoha* is underway! Meanwhile, Naruto and his friends have been chasing after Sasuke and Gaara, who is undergoing a terrifying transformation. Now, to save Sasuke and Sakura, Naruto must face off against this monstrous new version of Gaara.

# NARUTO

## VOL. 16

## EULOGY

## CONTENTS

NUMBER 136: THE LAST BLOW...!! 7

NUMBER 137: THE SHINOBI OF KONOHA...!! 27

NUMBER 138: OPERATION DESTROY KONOHA, TERMINATED!! 47

NUMBER 139: EULOGY...!! 71

NUMBER 140: CONTACT...!! 91

NUMBER 141: UCHIHA ITACHI!! 111

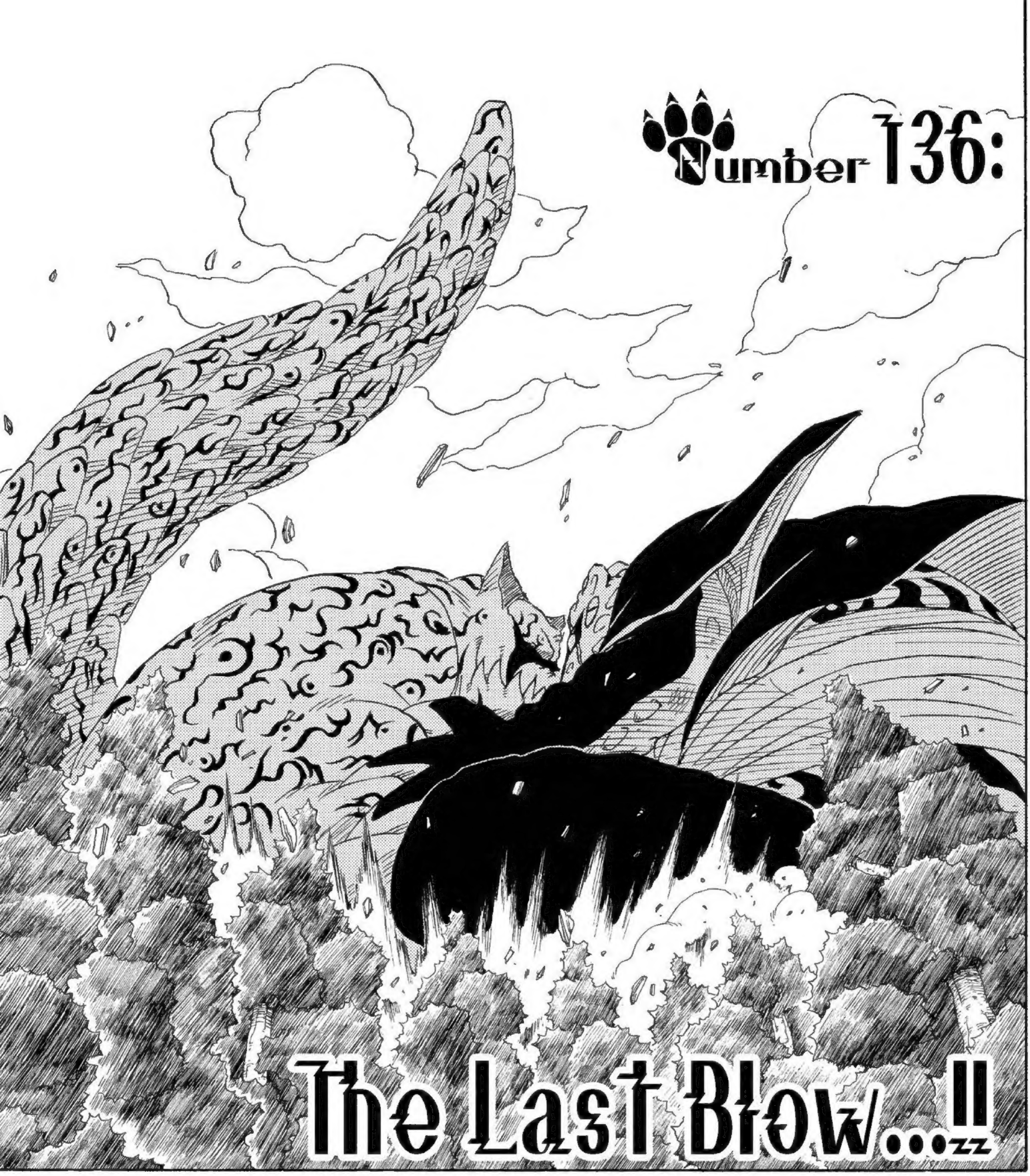
NUMBER 142: KAKASHI VS. ITACHI 131

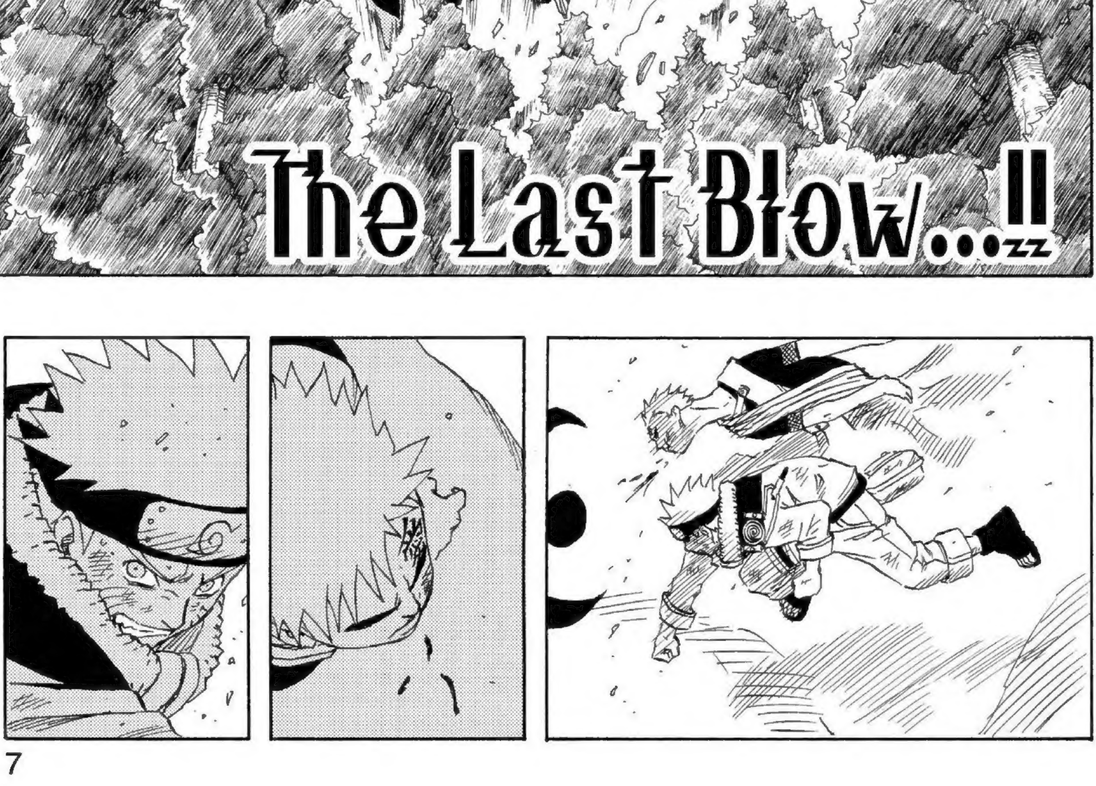
NUMBER 143: THE FOURTH HOKAGE'S LEGACY!! 151

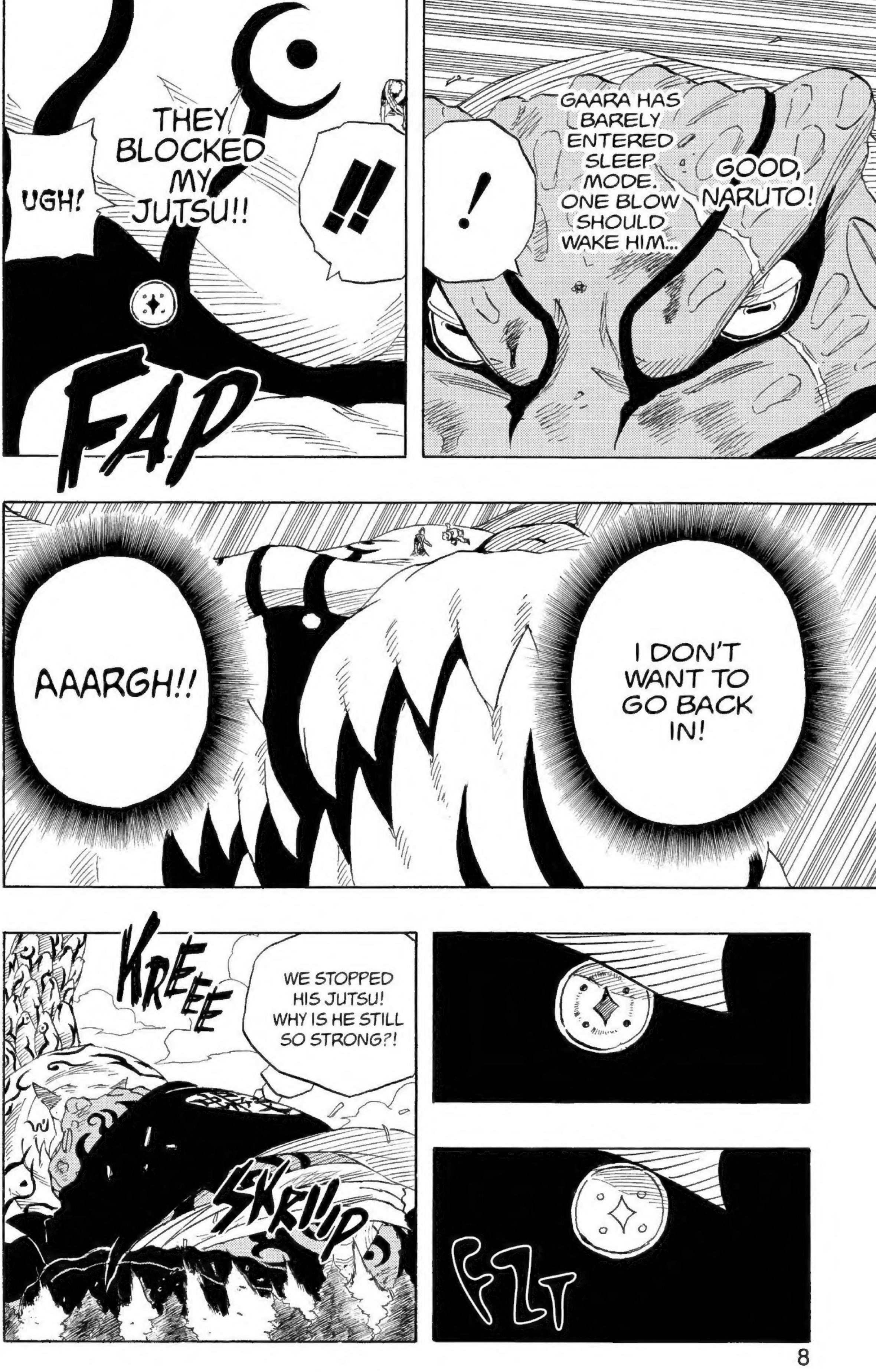
NUMBER 144: THE PURSUERS 171

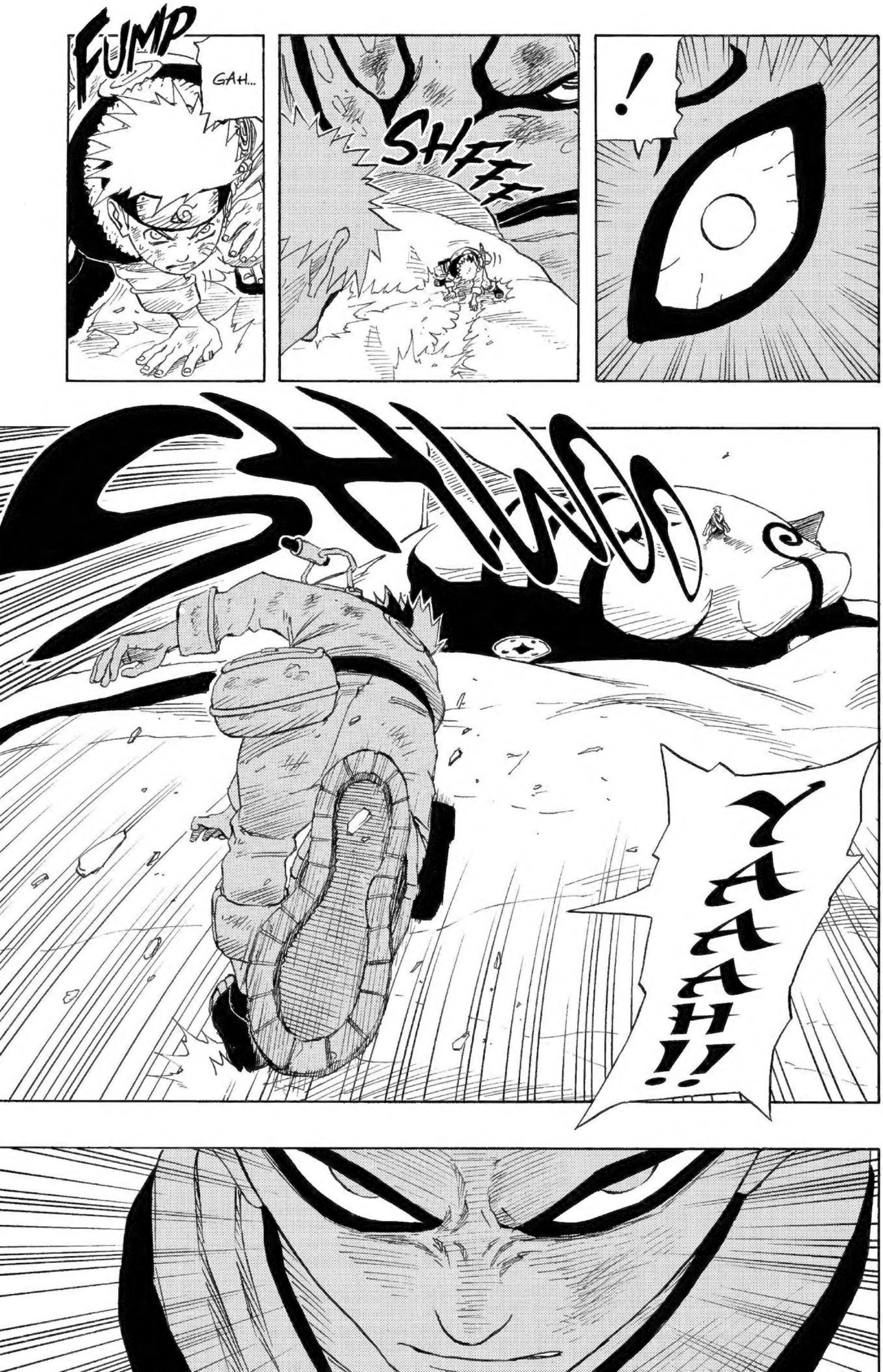
## Number 136:

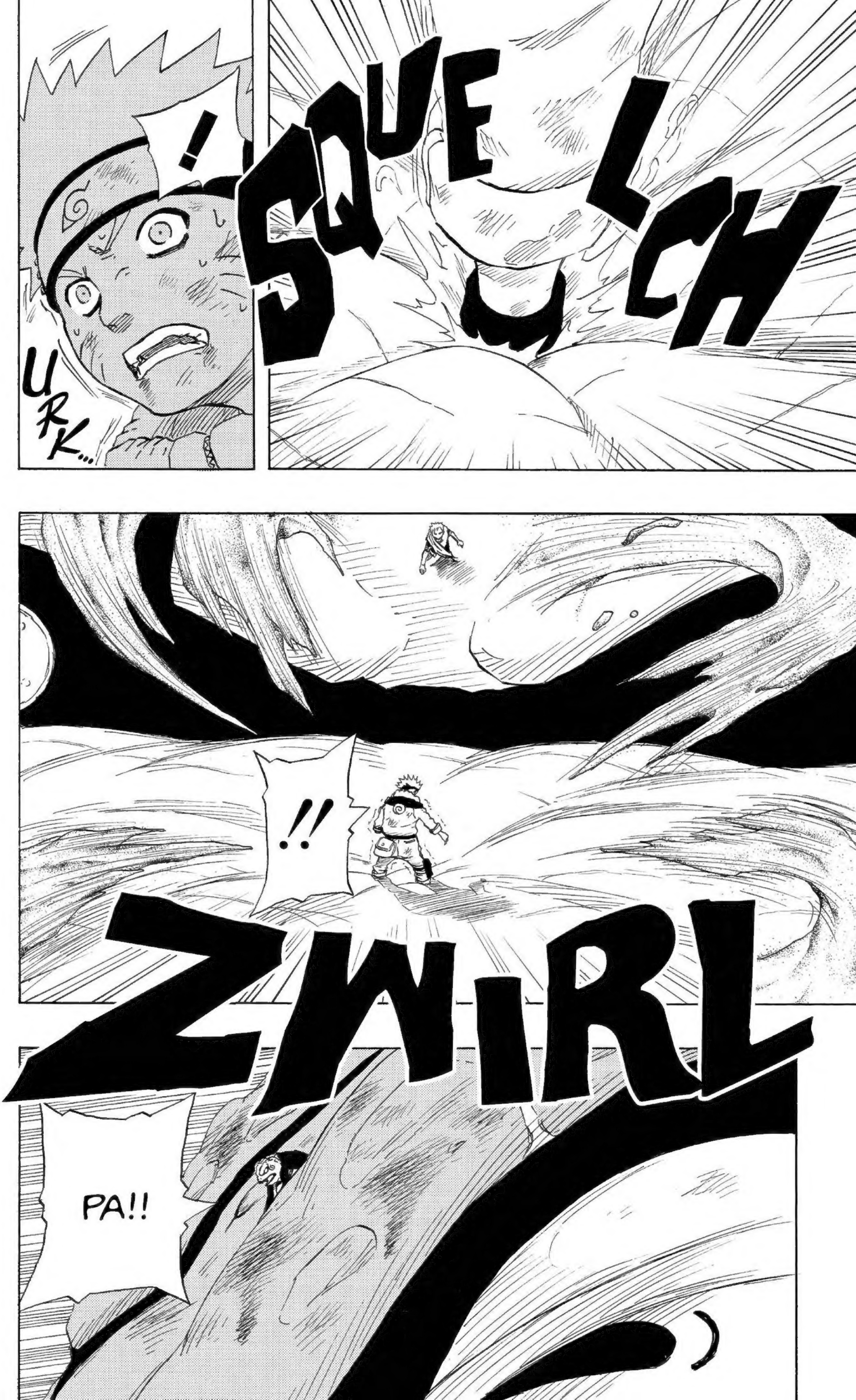
# The Last Blow...!!

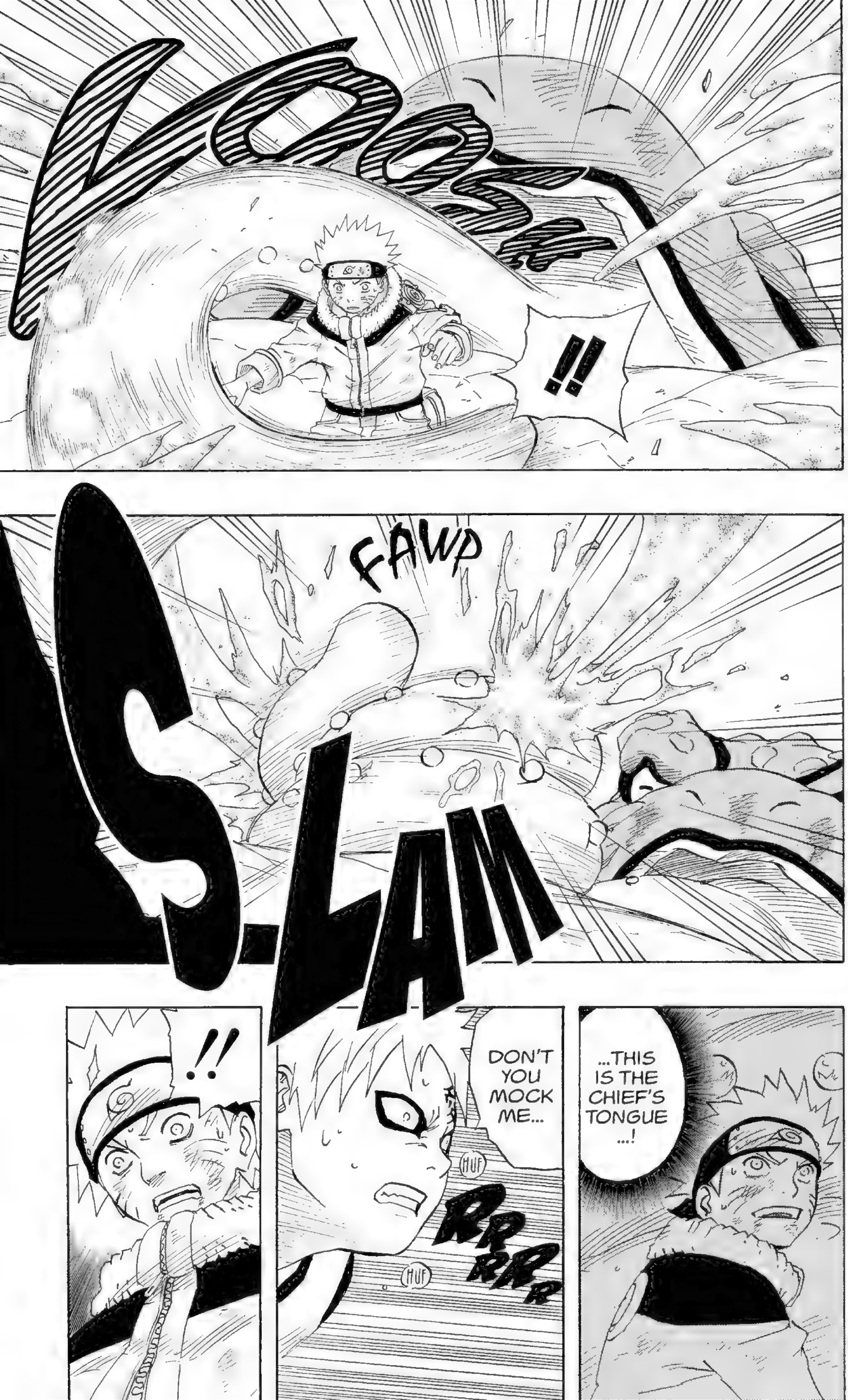


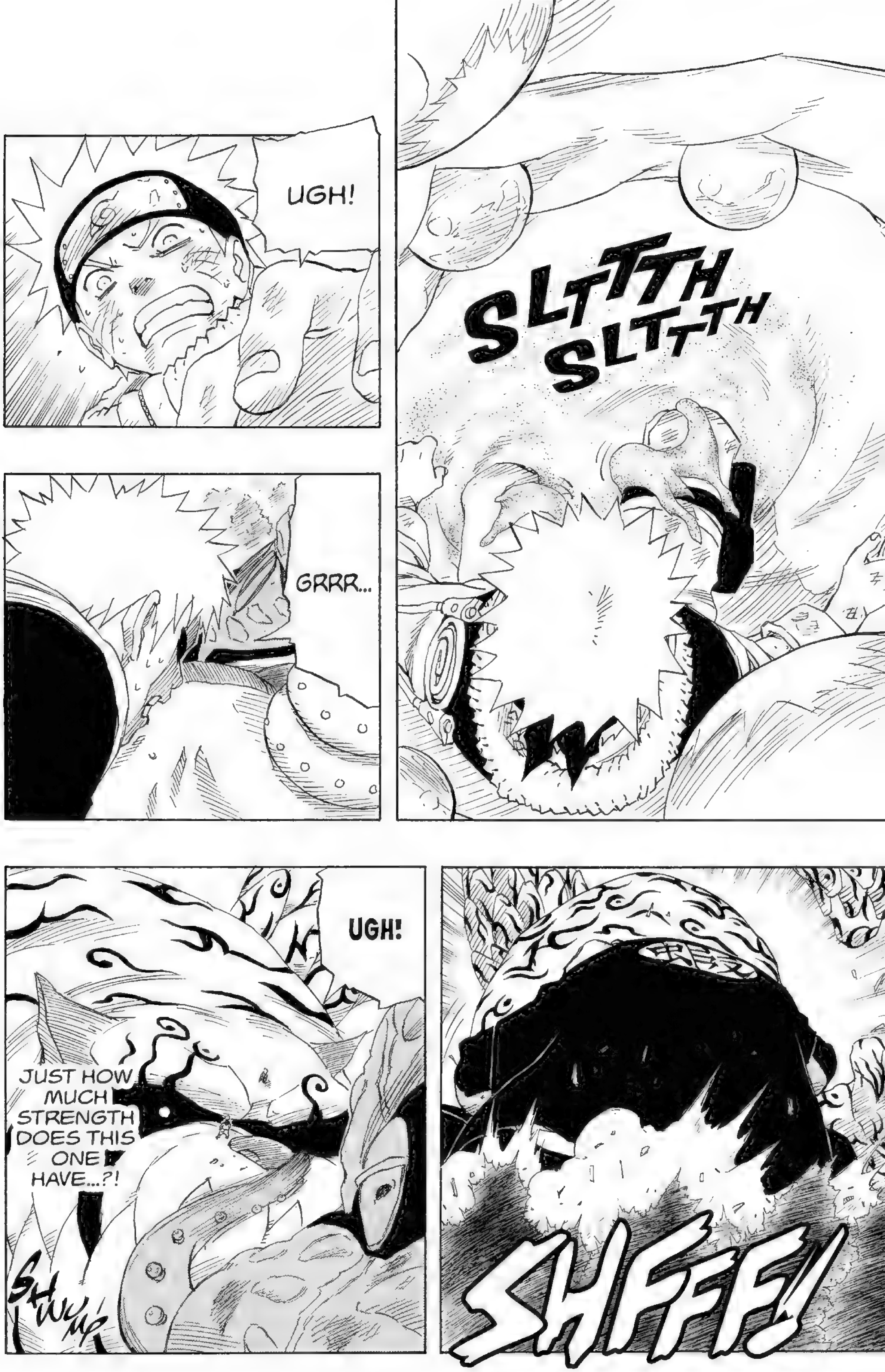



GOOD, NARUTO!
GAARA HAS BARELY ENTERED SLEEP MODE. ONE BLOW SHOULD WAKE HIM...
!
!!
THEY BLOCKED MY JUTSU!!
UGH!
FAP
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK IN!
AAARGH!!
FZT
WE STOPPED HIS JUTSU! WHY IS HE STILL SO STRONG?!
KREEE
SKRUUP

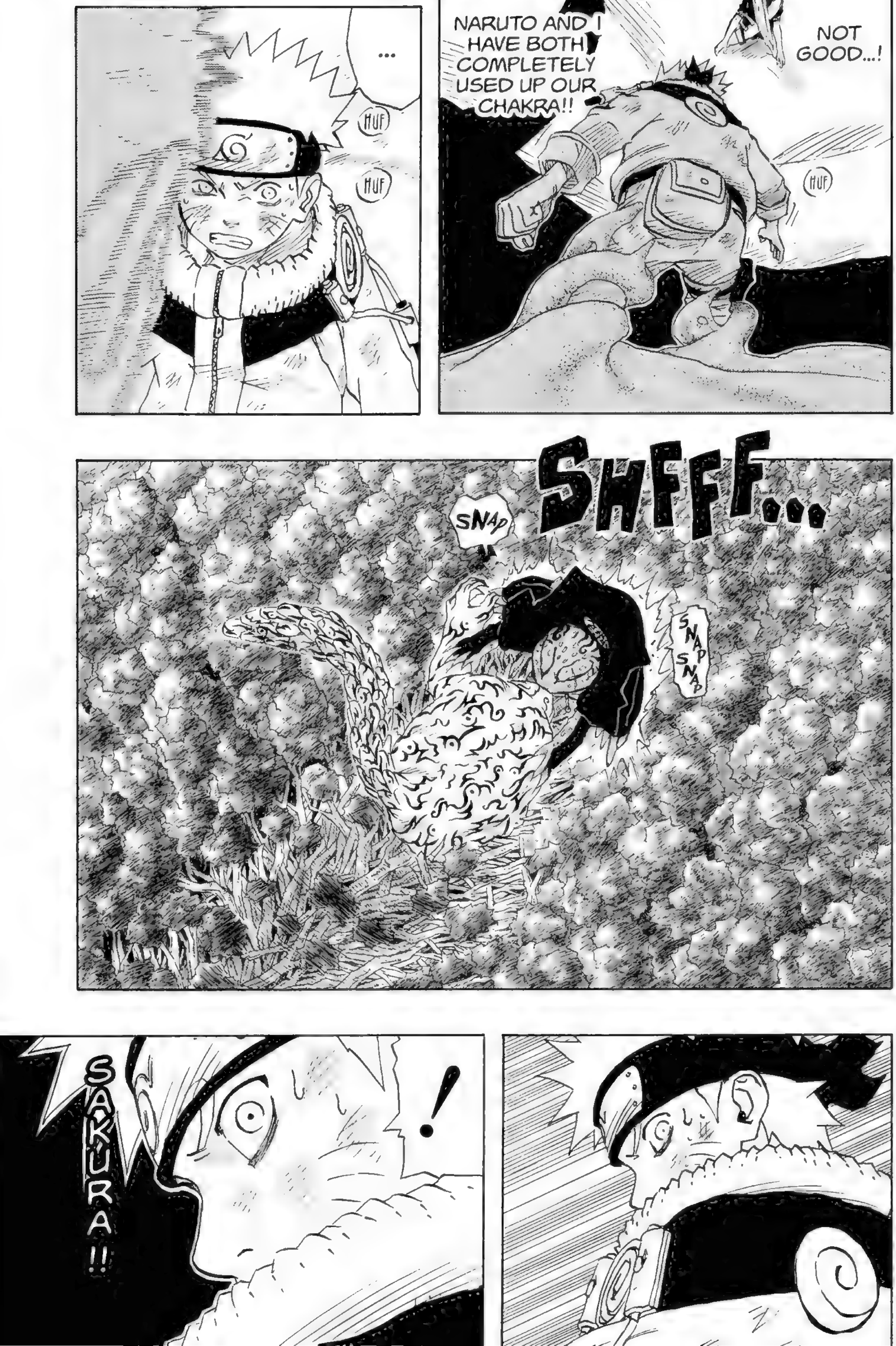

!
SHFFF
FUMP
GAH...
SHWOO
YAAAAH!!

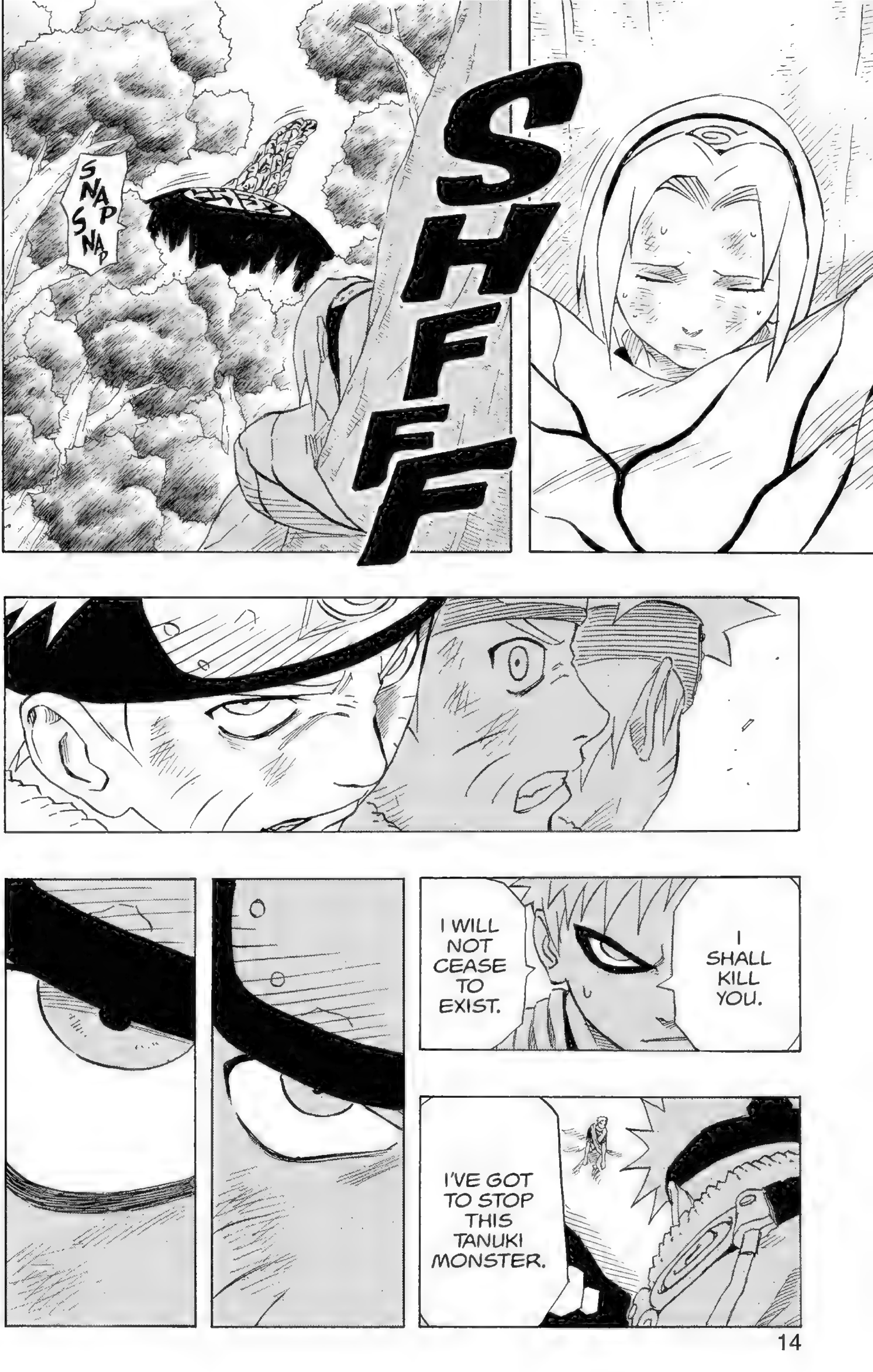

SQUELCH
!
URK...
!!
ZWIRL
PA!!

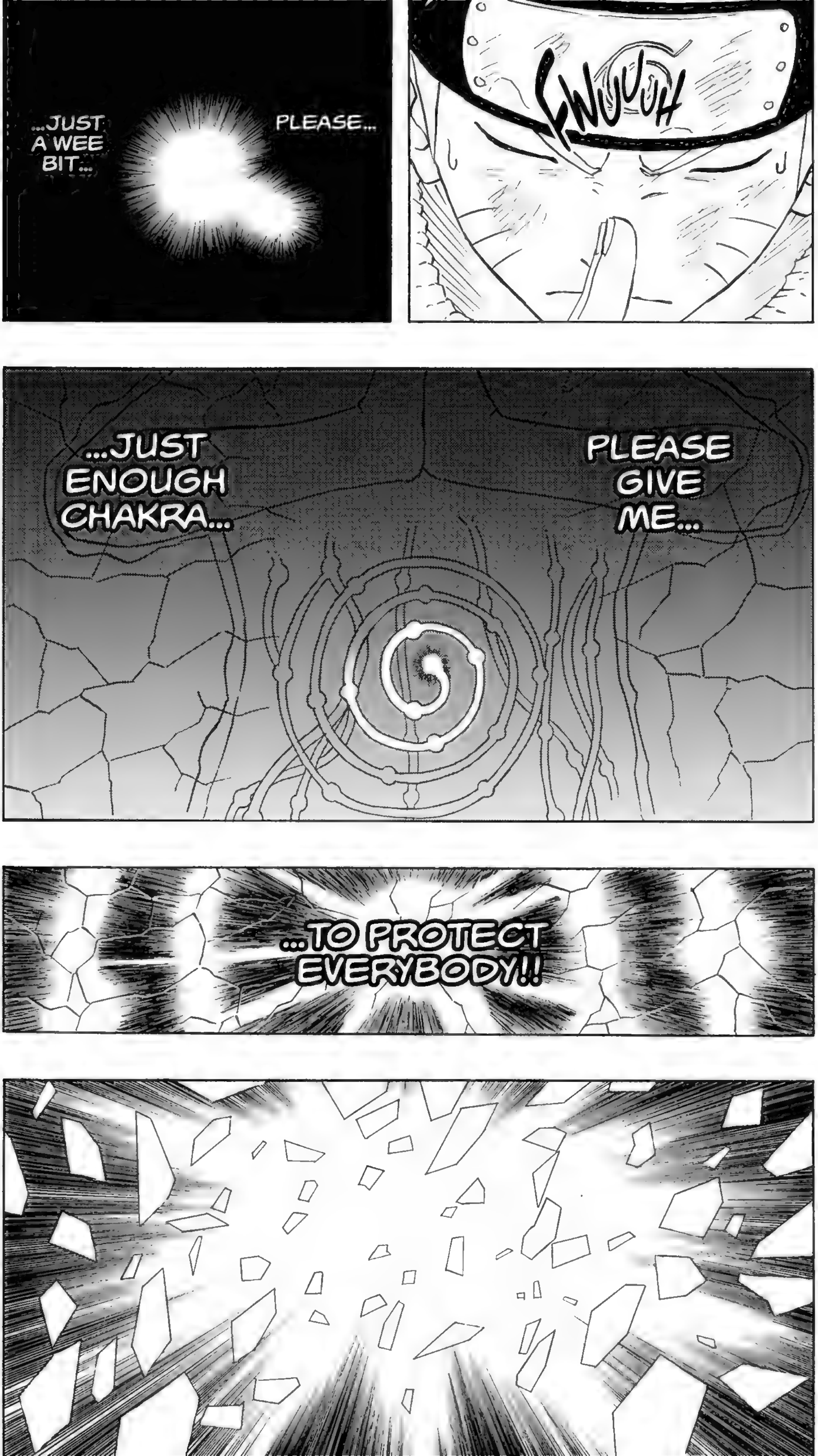

WOOSH
!!
FAWP
SLAM
...THIS IS THE CHIEF'S TONGUE ...!
DON'T YOU MOCK ME...
HUF
RRRRR
HUF
!!

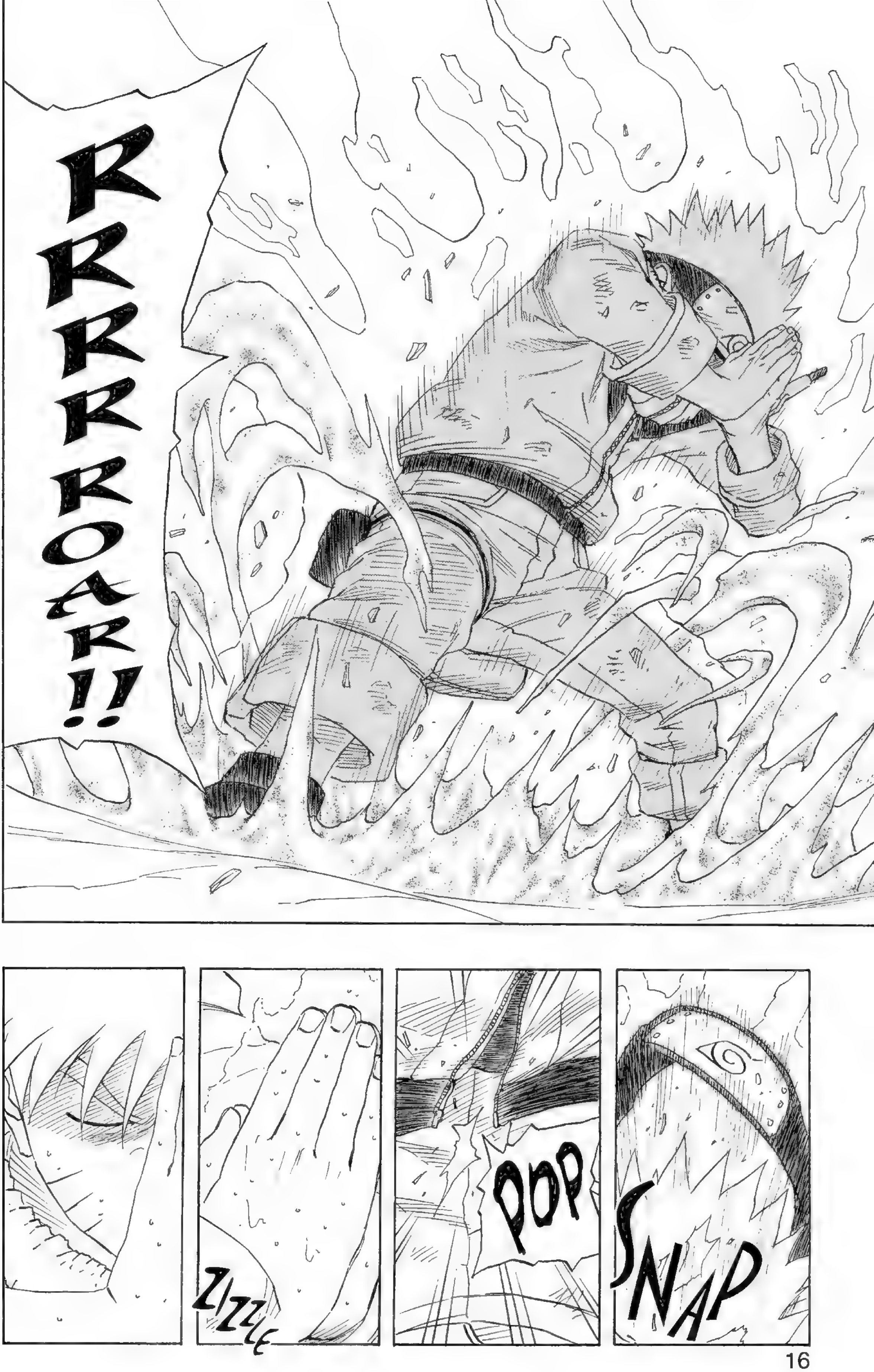

SLTTTH SLTTTTH
UGH!
GRRR...
SHFF!!
UGH!
JUST HOW MUCH STRENGTH DOES THIS ONE HAVE...?!
SHWUMP

READ THIS WAY

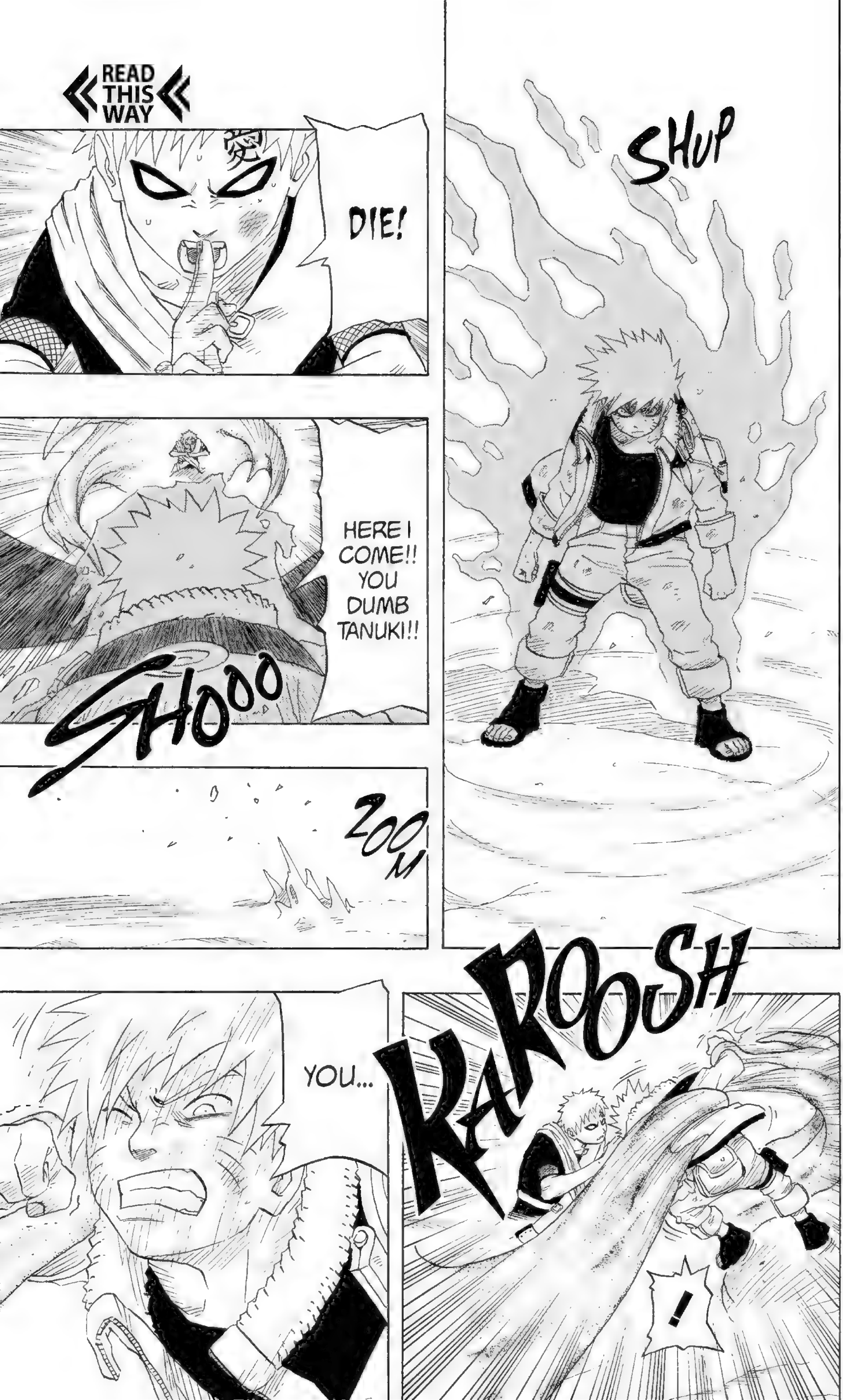

NOT GOOD...!
NARUTO AND I HAVE BOTH COMPLETELY USED UP OUR CHAKRA!!
HUF
...
HUF
HUF
SHFFF...
SNAP
SNAP SNAP
!
SAKURA!!

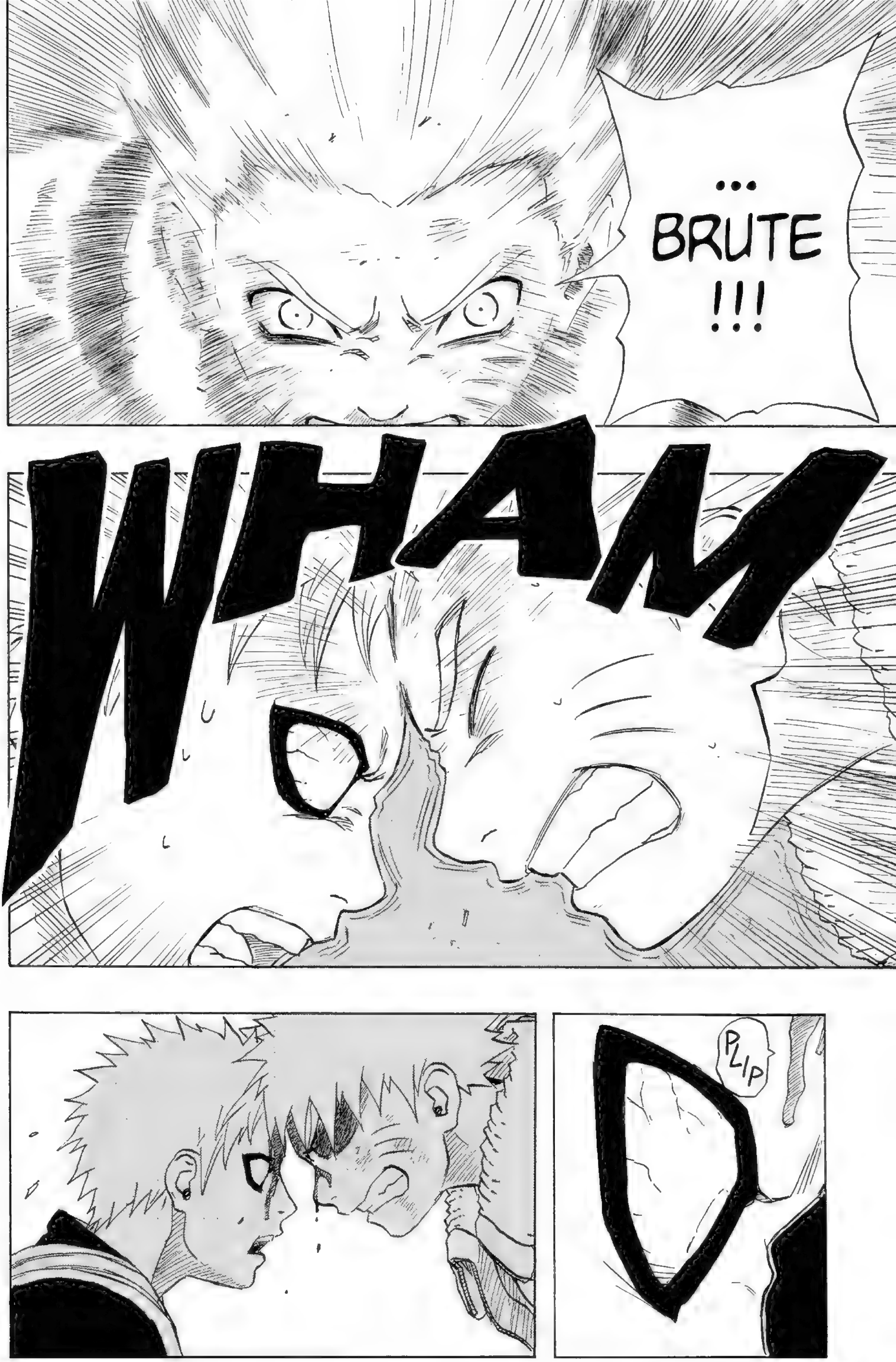

SHFFF
SNAP SNAP
I SHALL KILL YOU.
I WILL NOT CEASE TO EXIST.
I'VE GOT TO STOP THIS TANUKI MONSTER.

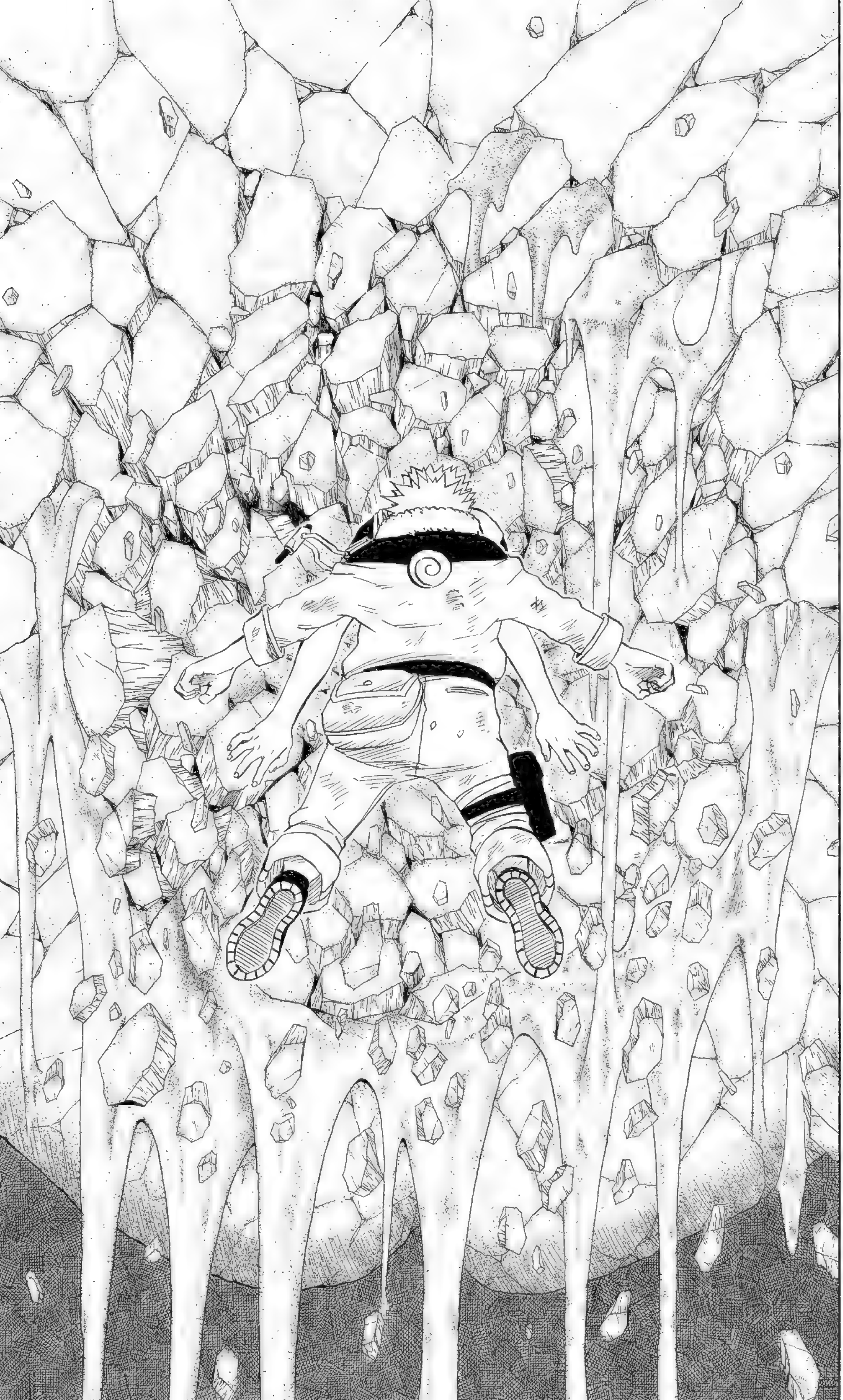

FWUUUH
PLEASE...
...JUST A WEE BIT...
PLEASE GIVE ME...
...JUST ENOUGH CHAKRA...
...TO PROTECT EVERYBODY!!

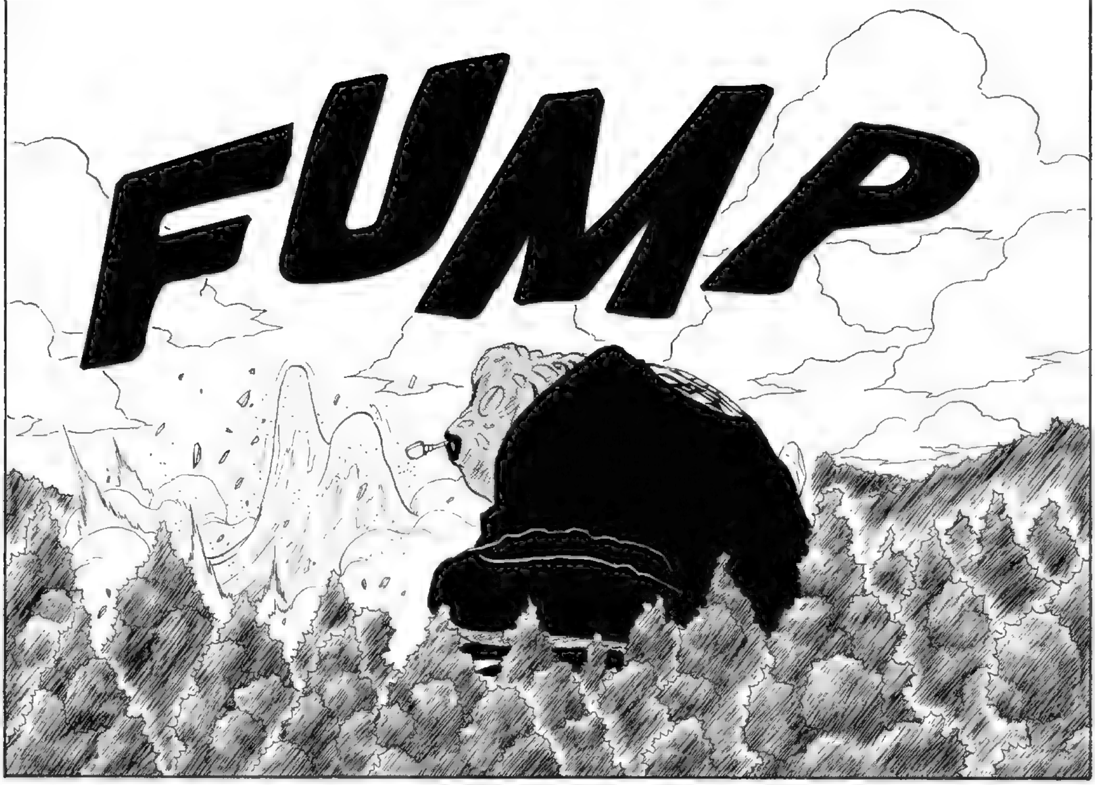

RRRRROAR!!
SNAP
POP
ZIZZLE

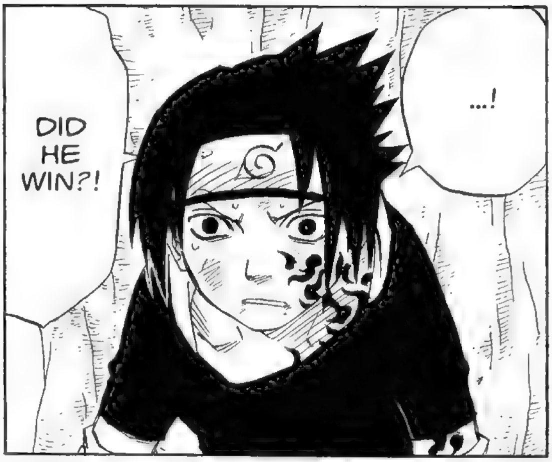
READ THIS WAY

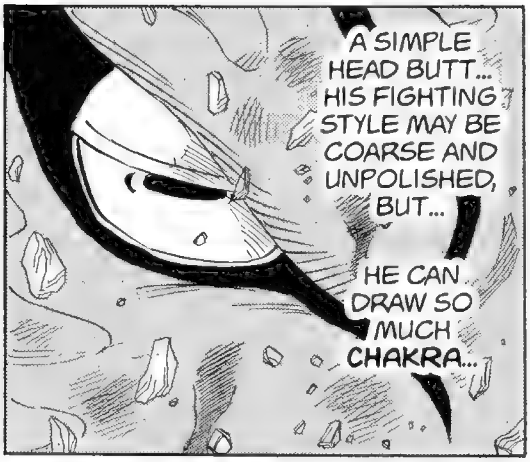

SHUP
DIE!
HERE I COME!! YOU DUMB TANUKI!!
SHOOO
ZOOM
KAROOSH
!
YOU...

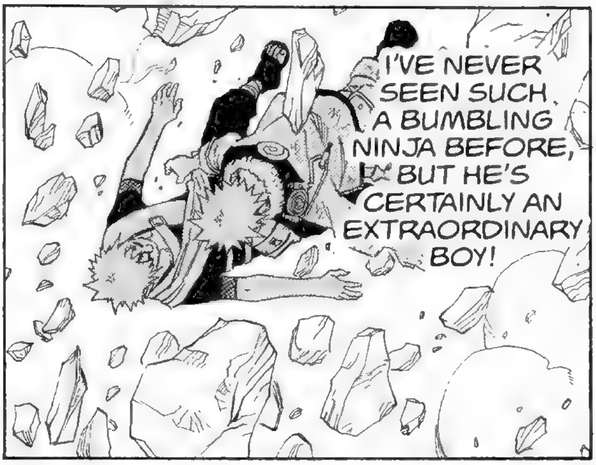

... BRUTE !!!
WHAM
PLIP

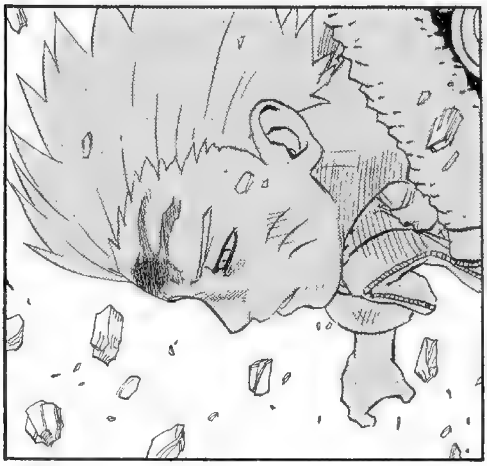


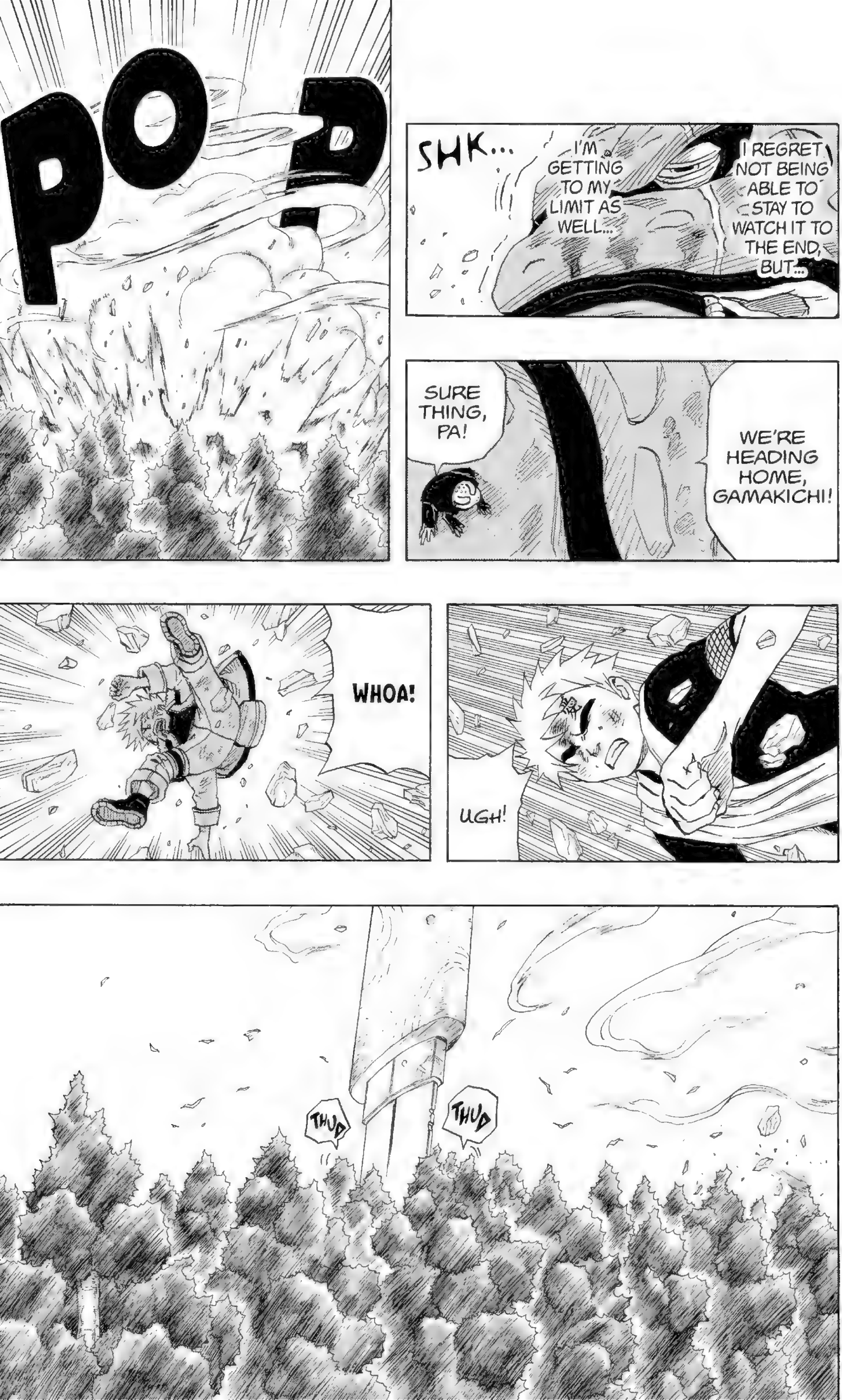

FUMP

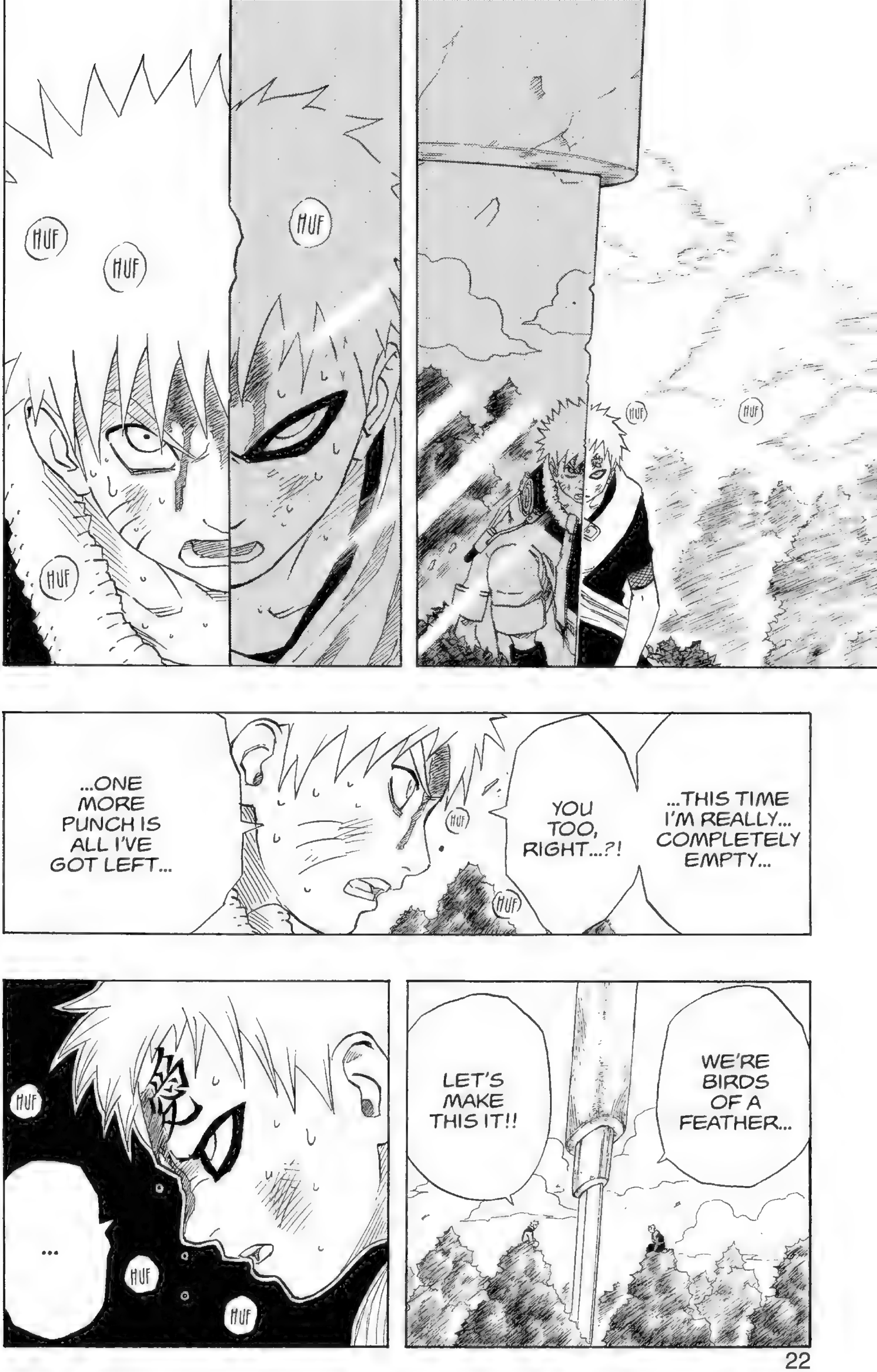

....!
DID HE WIN?!

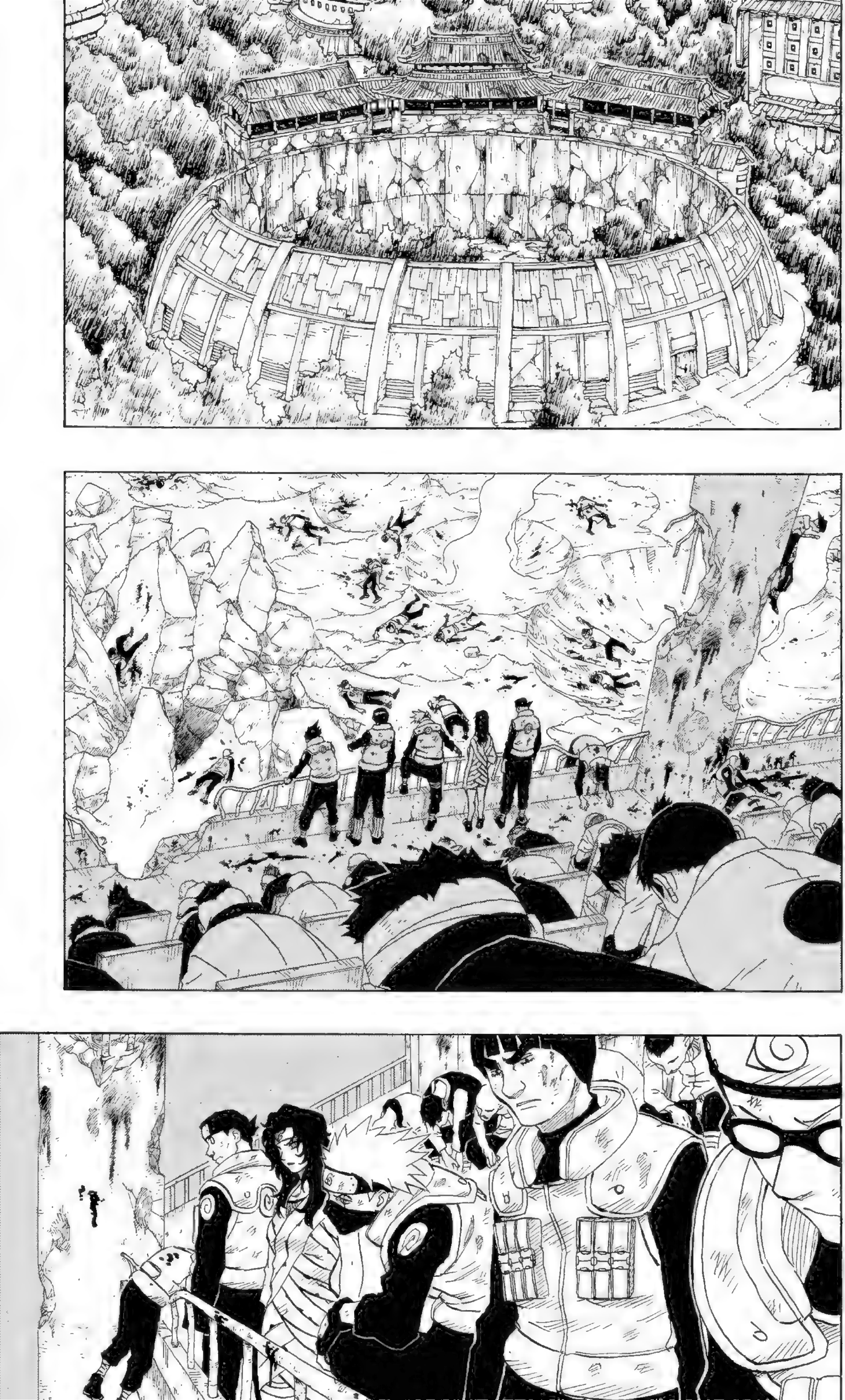

A SIMPLE HEAD BUTT... HIS FIGHTING STYLE MAY BE COARSE AND UNPOLISHED, BUT...
HE CAN DRAW SO MUCH **CHAKRA**...

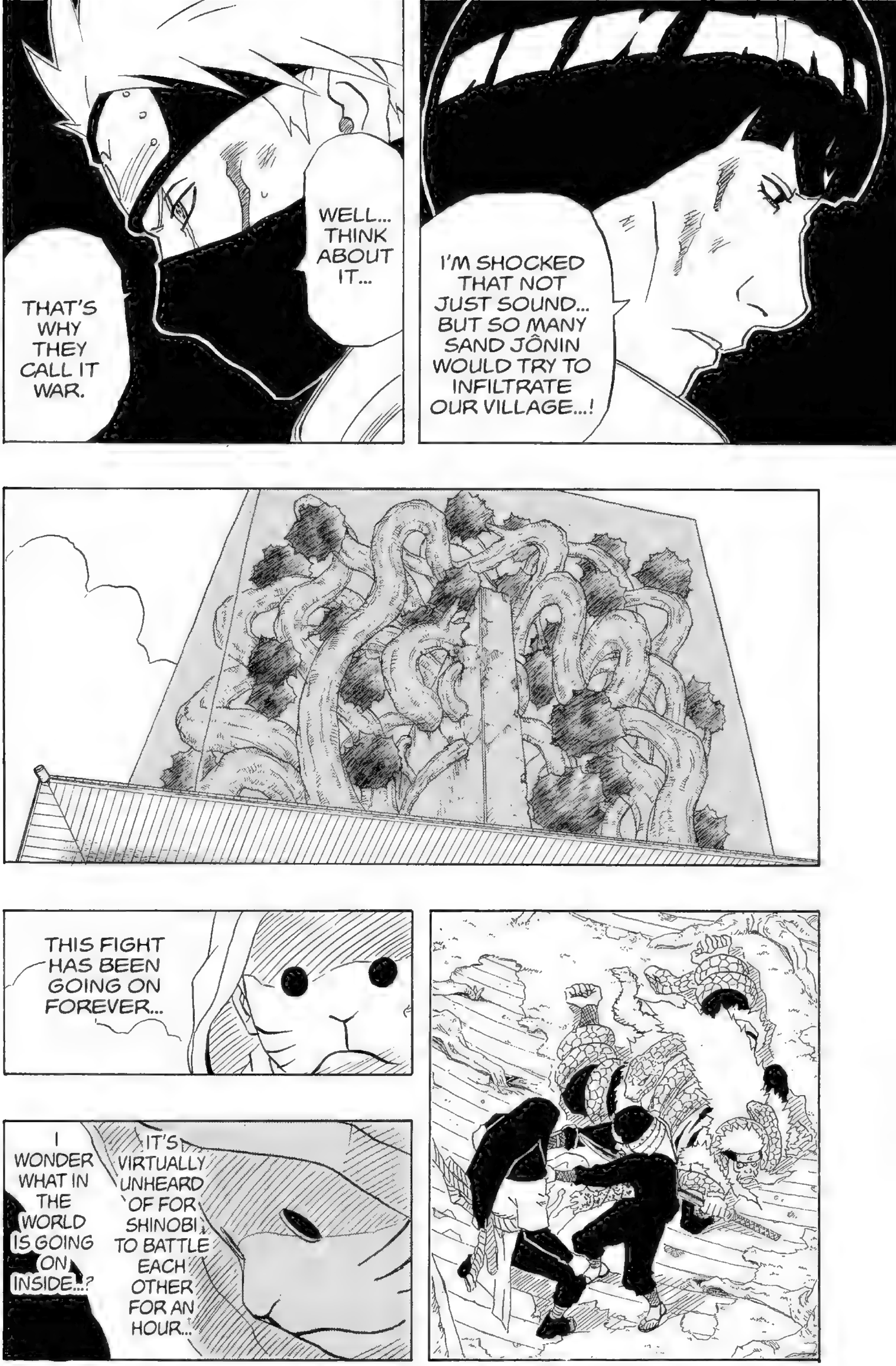

I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A BUMBLING NINJA BEFORE, BUT HE'S CERTAINLY AN EXTRAORDINARY BOY!



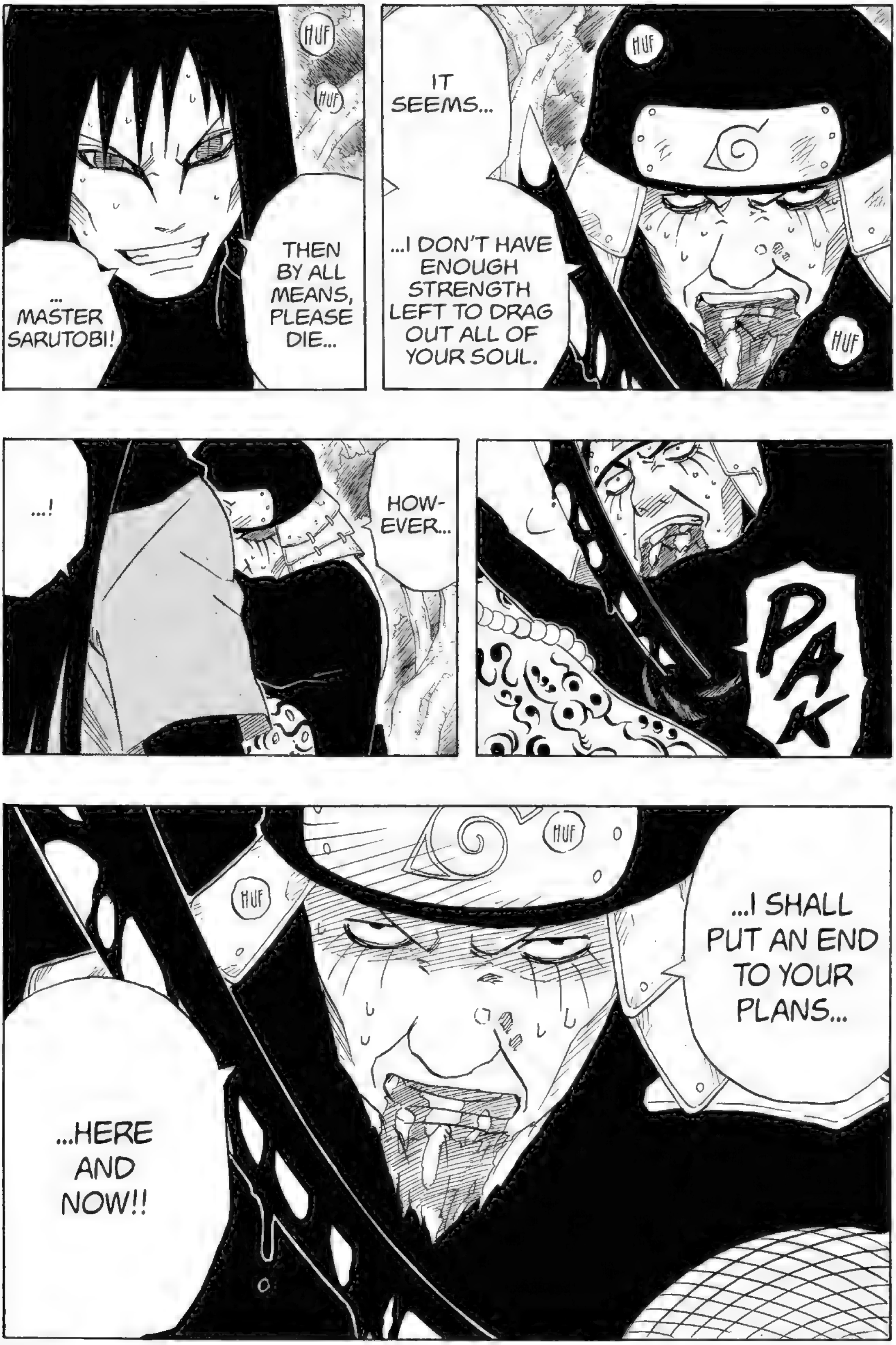

I REGRET NOT BEING ABLE TO STAY TO WATCH IT TO THE END, BUT...
I'M GETTING TO MY LIMIT AS WELL...
SHK...
WE'RE HEADING HOME, GAMAKICHI!
SURE THING, PA!
POP
UGH!
WHOA!
THUD
THUD


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
...THIS TIME I'M REALLY... COMPLETELY EMPTY...
YOU TOO, RIGHT...?!
HUF
HUF
...ONE MORE PUNCH IS ALL I'VE GOT LEFT...
WE'RE BIRDS OF A FEATHER...
LET'S MAKE THIS IT!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
...




I'M SHOCKED THAT NOT JUST SOUND... BUT SO MANY SAND JÔNIN WOULD TRY TO INFILTRATE OUR VILLAGE...!
WELL... THINK ABOUT IT...
THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT WAR.
THIS FIGHT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOREVER...
IT'S VIRTUALLY UNHEARD OF FOR SHINOBI TO BATTLE EACH OTHER FOR AN HOUR...
I WONDER WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON INSIDE...?

READ THIS WAY


HUF
IT SEEMS...
...I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH LEFT TO DRAG OUT ALL OF YOUR SOUL.
HUF
HUF
HUF
THEN BY ALL MEANS, PLEASE DIE...
...MASTER SARUTOBI!
DAK
HOW-EVER...
...!
HUF
HUF
...I SHALL PUT AN END TO YOUR PLANS...
...HERE AND NOW!!

## THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
## MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 23

IN MY SECOND YEAR OF COLLEGE, I GOT SERIOUS AND DECIDED TO SUBMIT MANGA FOR REAL, TARGETING SHONEN MAGAZINES. "NOW! WHAT SHALL I DRAW..." I STARTED OFF IN HIGH SPIRITS, BUT THEN IMMEDIATELY RAN INTO A BLOCK. THE STORY I HAD THOUGHT UP HAD TOO MANY PLOT POINTS, AND I COULDN'T FIT EVERYTHING INTO THE PAGE LIMIT. EARLY ON IN ONE'S CAREER, ONE OFTEN BECOMES OVERENTHUSIASTIC AND GREEDY, TRYING TO SQUEEZE ALL OF ONE'S IDEAS INTO A SINGLE PIECE. I WAS LIKE THAT TOO. THE STORY OFTEN BECOMES CLUNKY AND UNWIELDY, AND THERE ARE SO MANY CHARACTERS THAT NO ONE CHARACTER ENDS UP STANDING OUT AS THE MAIN CHARACTER.

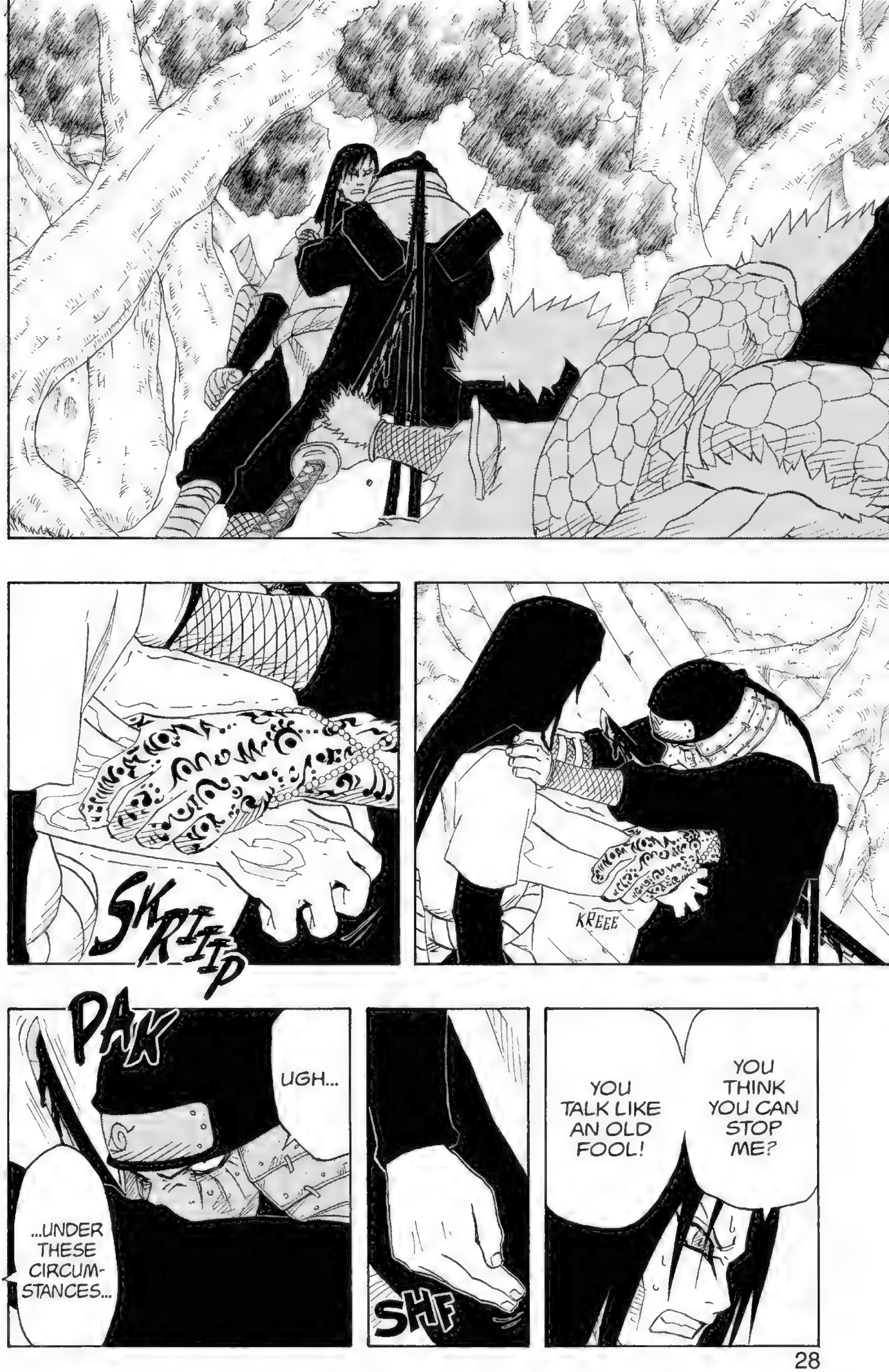
THUS! I USED THE PAGE LIMIT AS MY CLEAR-CUT SOLUTION. I SHAVED OFF WHATEVER PLOT POINTS I FELT WERE EXTRANEOUS, AND GOT RID OF A BUNCH OF CHARACTERS. WHEN I FINALLY FELT I COULD TELL THE STORY WITHIN THE PAGE LIMIT, I SAT DOWN AND STARTED DRAWING IN EARNEST. ...HOWEVER, IT'S NOT LIKE THE STORY COULD STAY COMPLETELY THE SAME, SO A **FEW MINOR DIFFICULTIES** AROSE. ...BUT... THEY WEREN'T HUGE DIFFICULTIES! JUST THAT PLOT-WISE, I HAD ORIGINALLY WANTED TO TELL THE TALE OF A **NATIONAL** DILEMMA STARRING A MAIN CHARACTER POSSESSING NATIONAL POWER, WITH GRAND SPECTACLE (!). BUT IN THE END, IT WAS A SMALL-SCALE STORY INVOLVING "SMALL-TOWN FOLK" THAT I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO WORK UP... IT'S LIKE THE FEW MINOR DIFFICULTIES THAT WOULD CROP UP IF ONE FORGED AHEAD AND FILMED A SCI-FI MOVIE EVEN KNOWING ONE WOULDN'T BE GIVEN ANYTHING NEAR AN ADEQUATE BUDGET. THAT'S WHAT'S KNOWN AS "A NEWCOMER'S COARSENESS SHOWING THROUGH HIS INABILITY TO SNUGLY CONTAIN THINGS"!

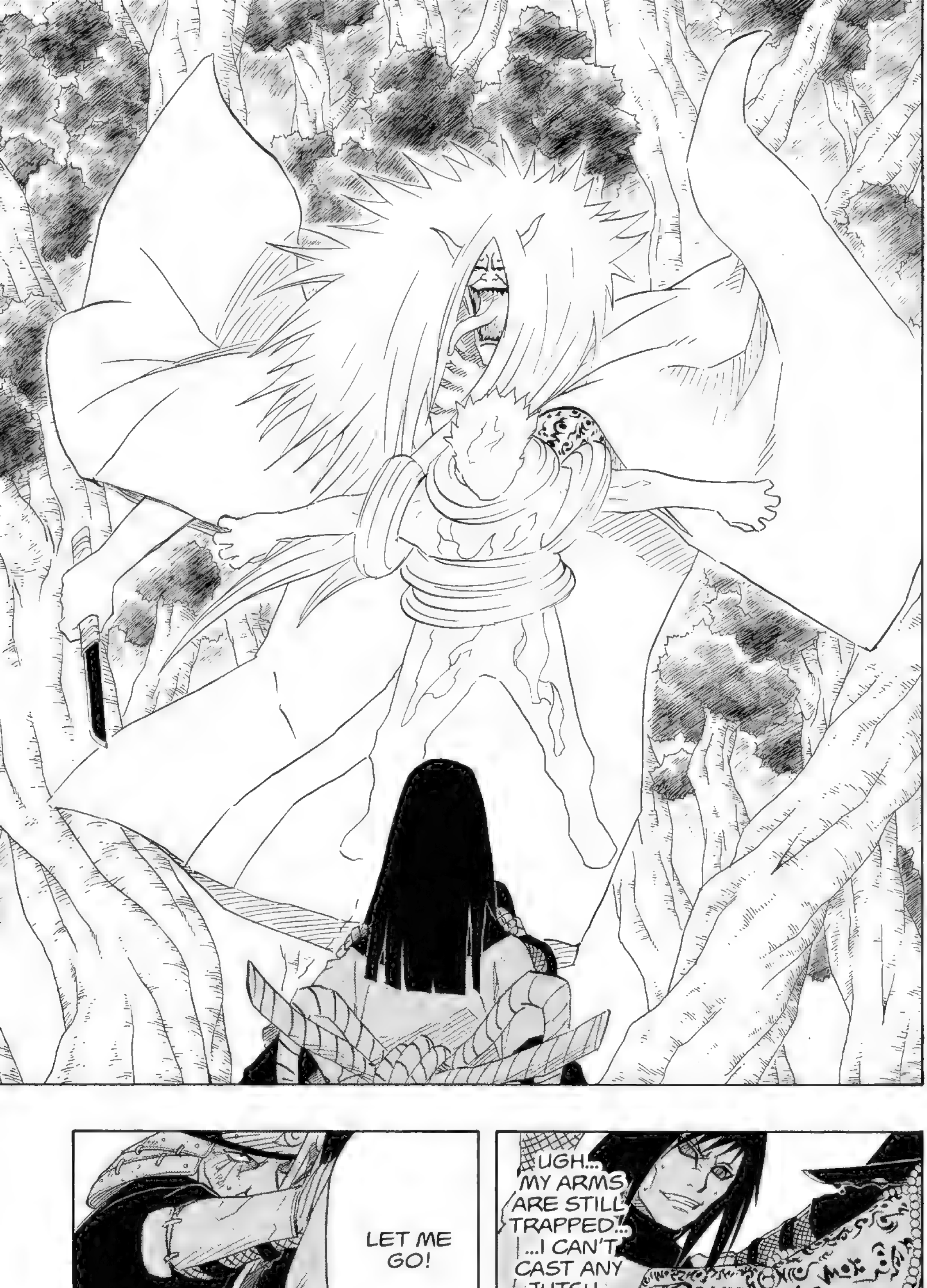
...IN ANY CASE! WHAT I AIMED FOR WAS *WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP'S* HOP☆STEP AWARD, WITH ITS PRIZE MONEY OF 500 THOUSAND YEN [ROUGHLY $5000] (TAKE-HOME)... OR RATHER... I WON!!!

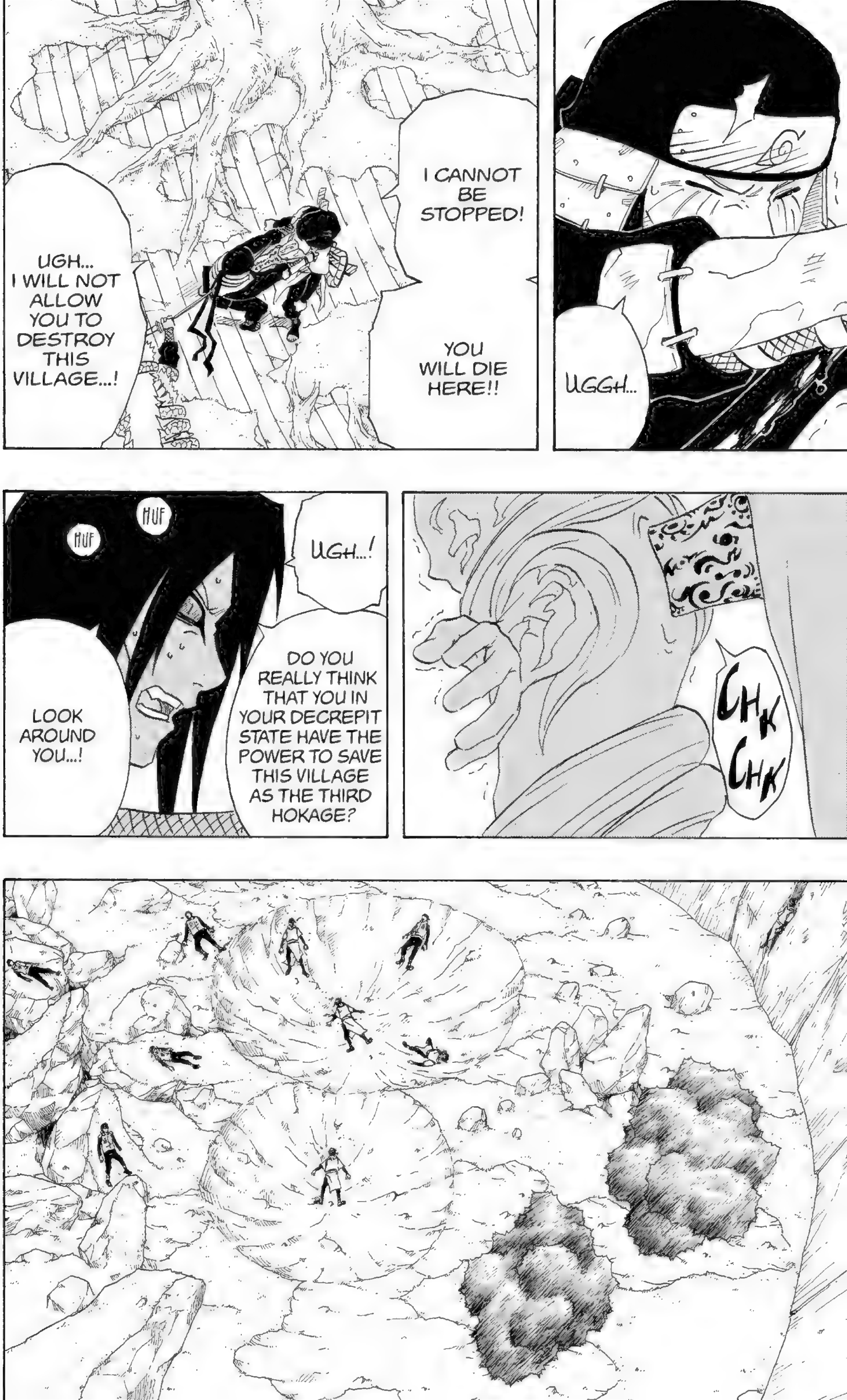
THE TITLE OF THAT MANGA WAS "KARAKURI" [MECHANISM]. "KARAKURI" IS A POPULAR NAME FOR A SUPER-STRENGTH ANDROID OR ROBOT. I HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT JAPANESE NAMING SCHEMES WERE COOL, SO I DECIDED I WOULDN'T USE ANY WEIRD WESTERN TERMS OR NAMES. THAT'S WHY I WENT WITH THE JAPANESE "KARAKURI" INSTEAD OF "CYBORG"! AND IT TURNS OUT THAT THIS STAND-ALONE STORY, "KARAKURI," WOULD GREATLY CHANGE MY DESTINY. BUT OF THAT, THE YOUNG KISHIMOTO WAS STILL UNAWARE.

# Number 137:

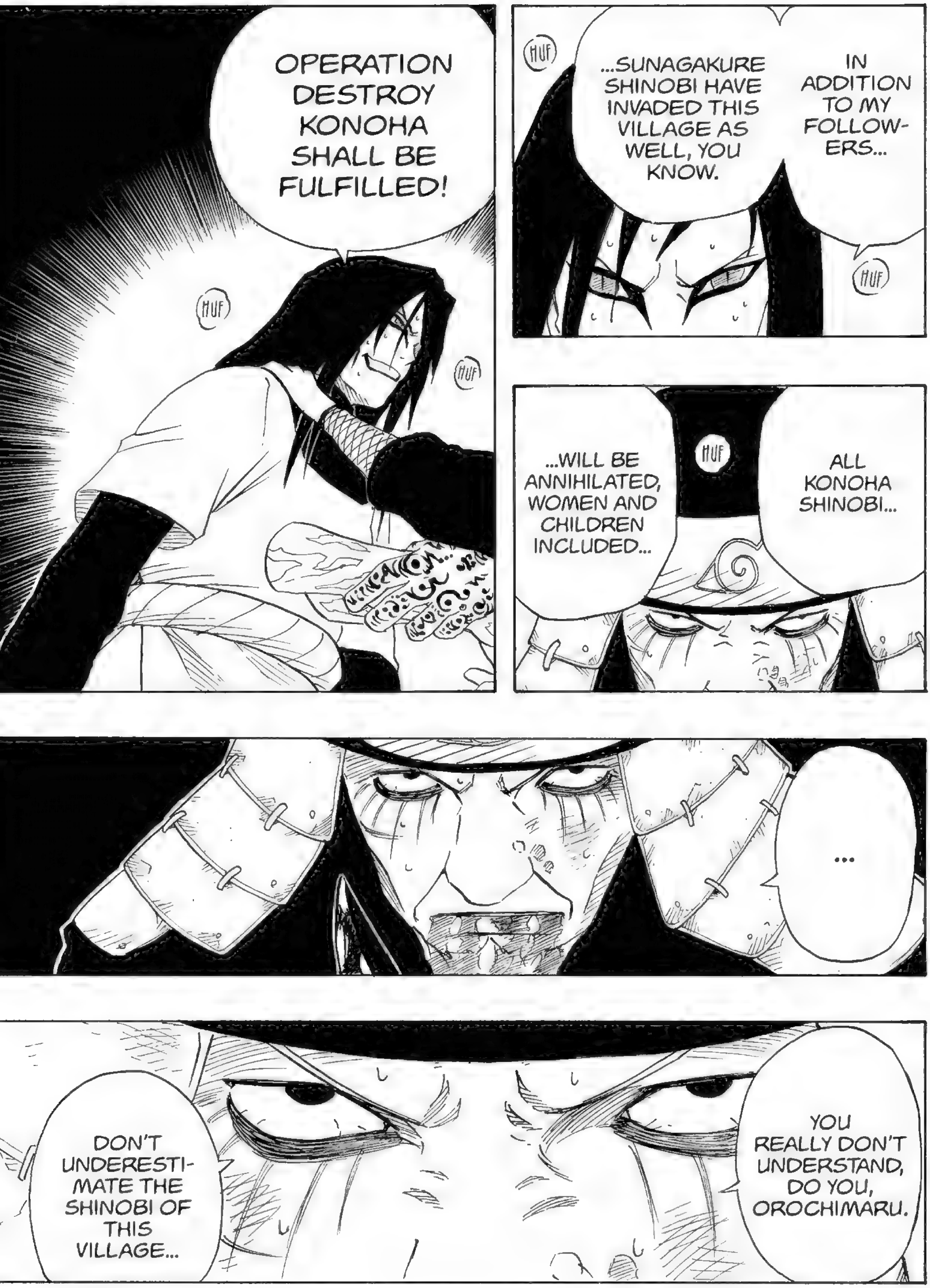
# The Shinobi of Konoha...!!

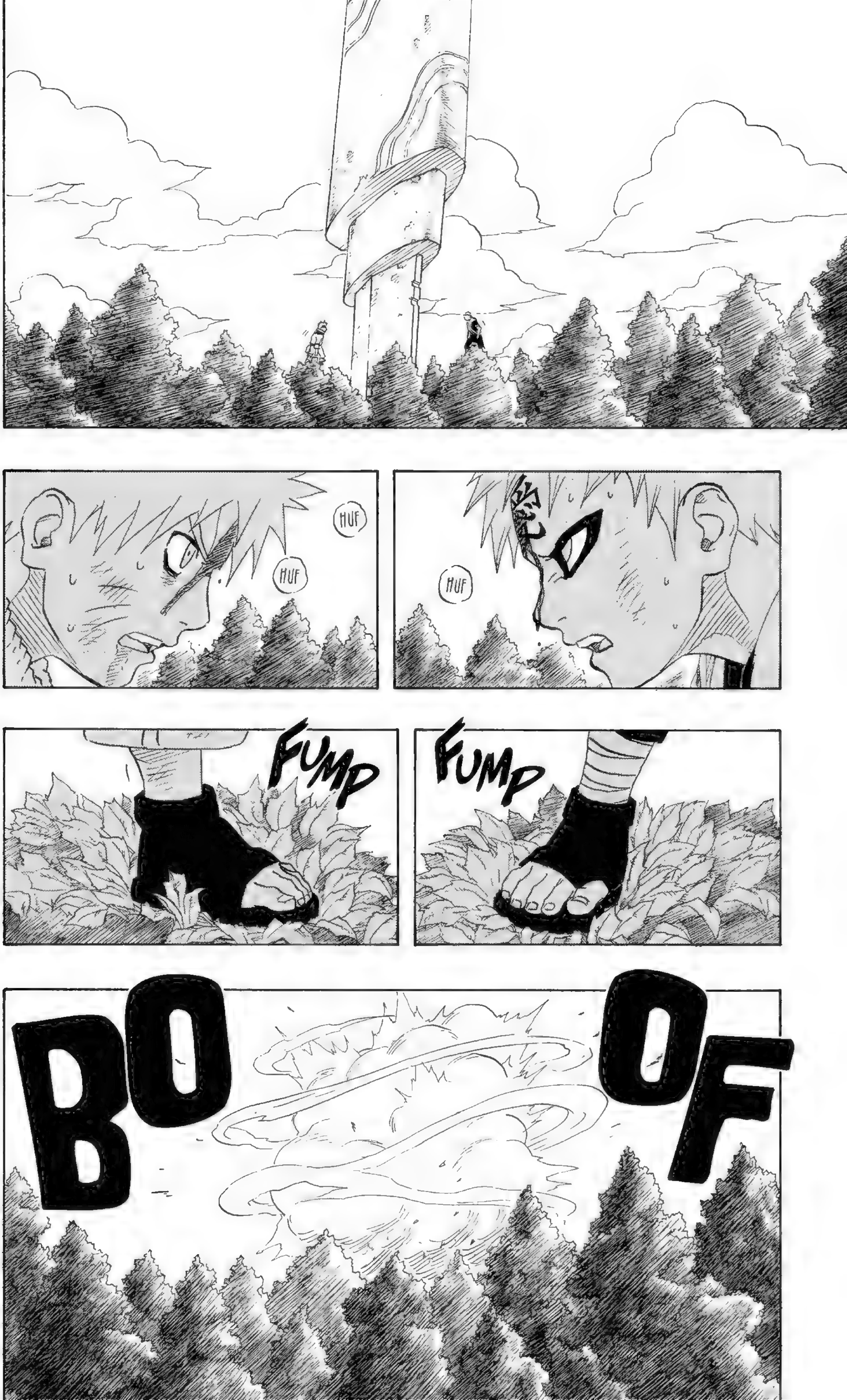

KREEE
SKRIIIP
YOU THINK YOU CAN STOP ME?
YOU TALK LIKE AN OLD FOOL!
SHF
DAK
UGH...
...UNDER THESE CIRCUM-STANCES...


UGH... MY ARMS ARE STILL TRAPPED... ...I CAN'T CAST ANY JUTSU...
LET ME GO!
GRIND GRIND

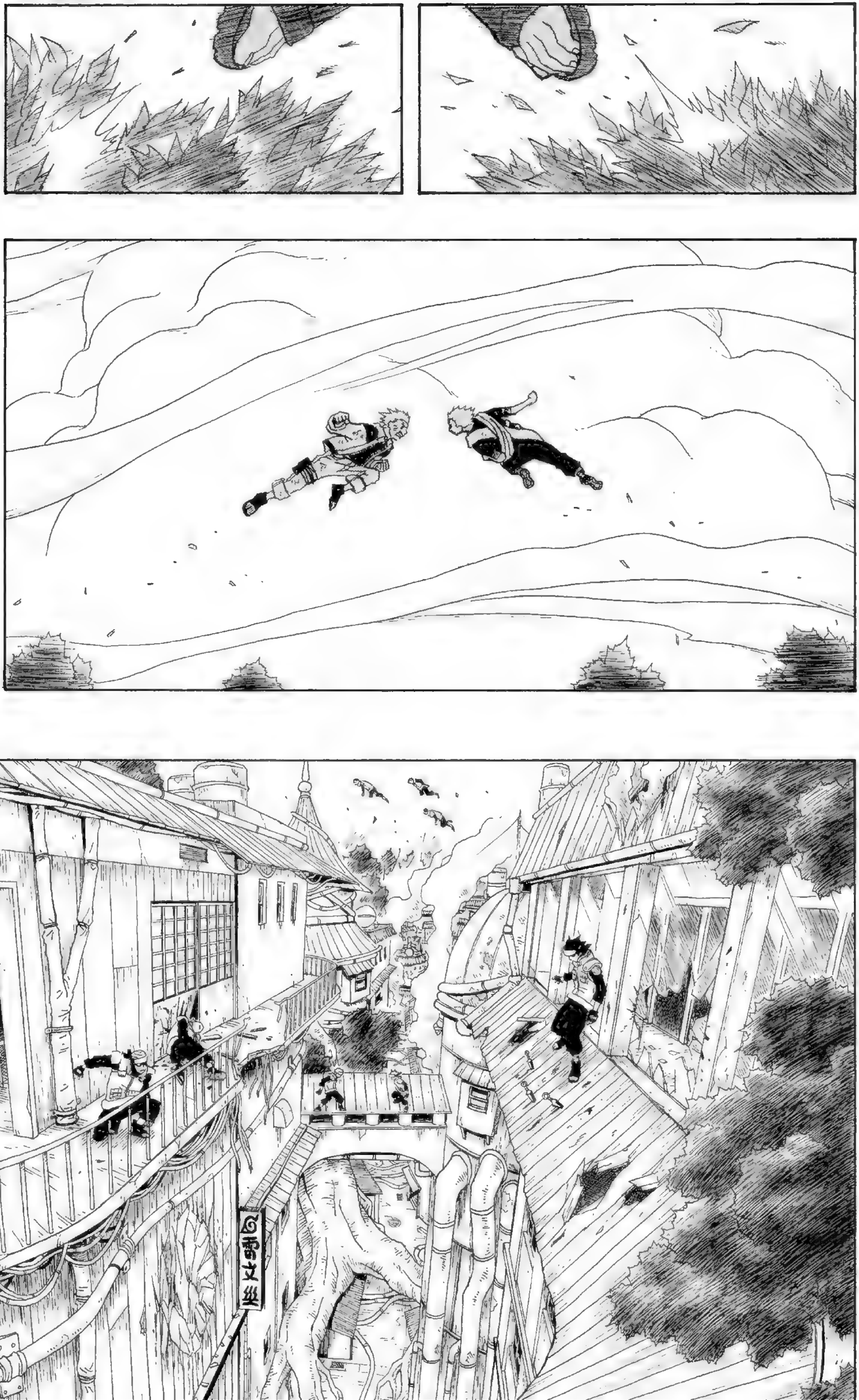

UGGH...
I CANNOT BE STOPPED!
YOU WILL DIE HERE!!
UGH... I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO DESTROY THIS VILLAGE...!
CHK CHK
UGH...!
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU IN YOUR DECREPIT STATE HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE THIS VILLAGE AS THE THIRD HOKAGE?
LOOK AROUND YOU...!
HUF
HUF

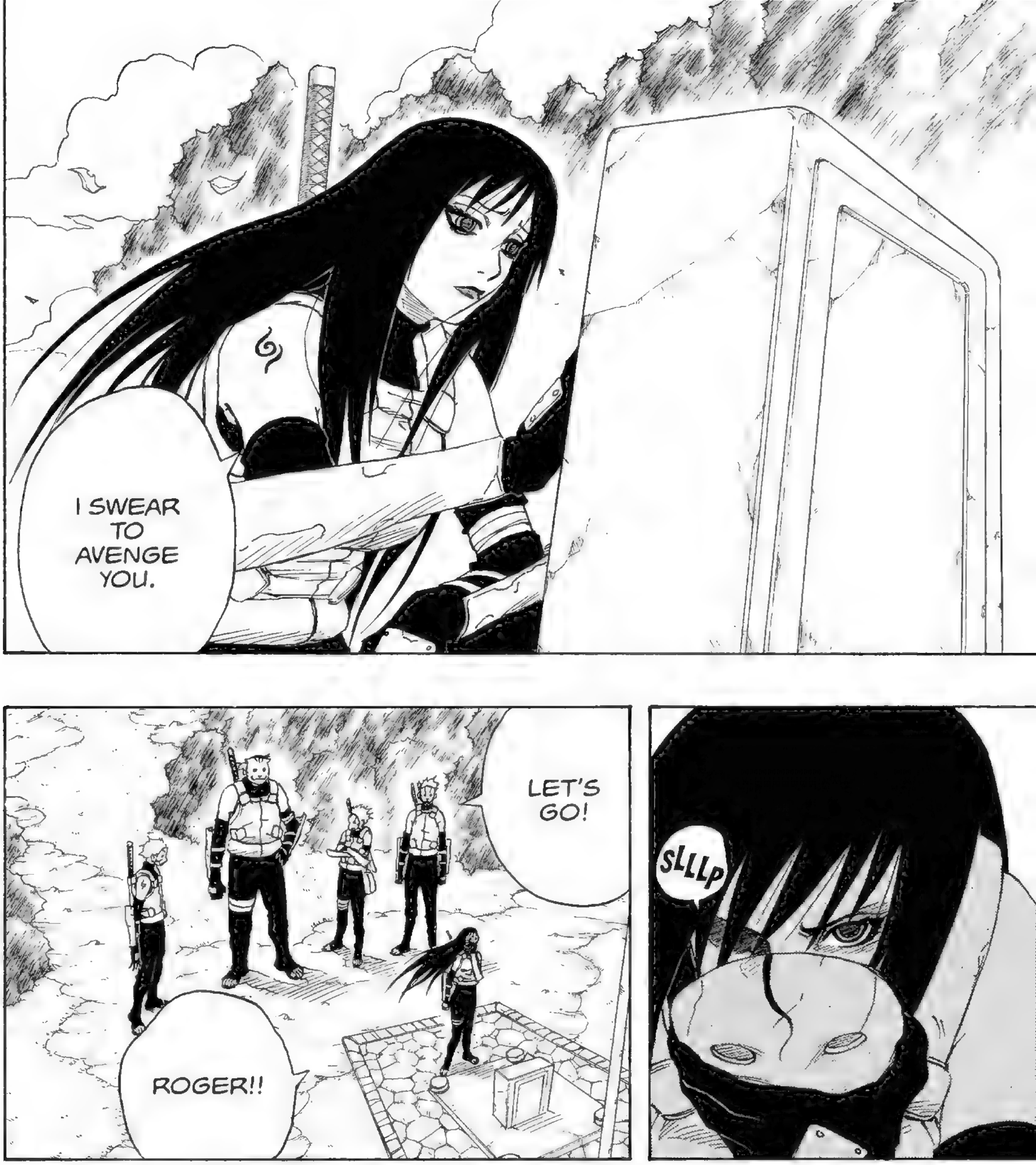
READ THIS WAY


HUF
IN ADDITION TO MY FOLLOWERS...
...SUNAGAKURE SHINOBI HAVE INVADED THIS VILLAGE AS WELL, YOU KNOW.
HUF
HUF
ALL KONOHA SHINOBI...
...WILL BE ANNIHILATED, WOMEN AND CHILDREN INCLUDED...
OPERATION DESTROY KONOHA SHALL BE FULFILLED!
HUF
HUF
...
YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU, OROCHIMARU.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE SHINOBI OF THIS VILLAGE...

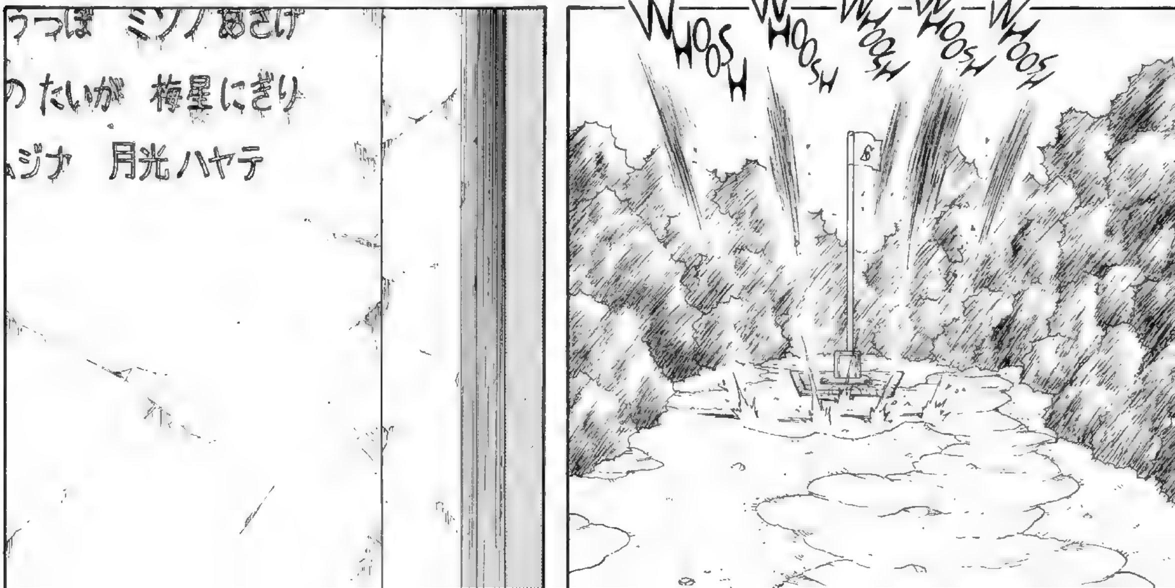

HUF
HUF
HUF
FUMP
FUMP
BOOF

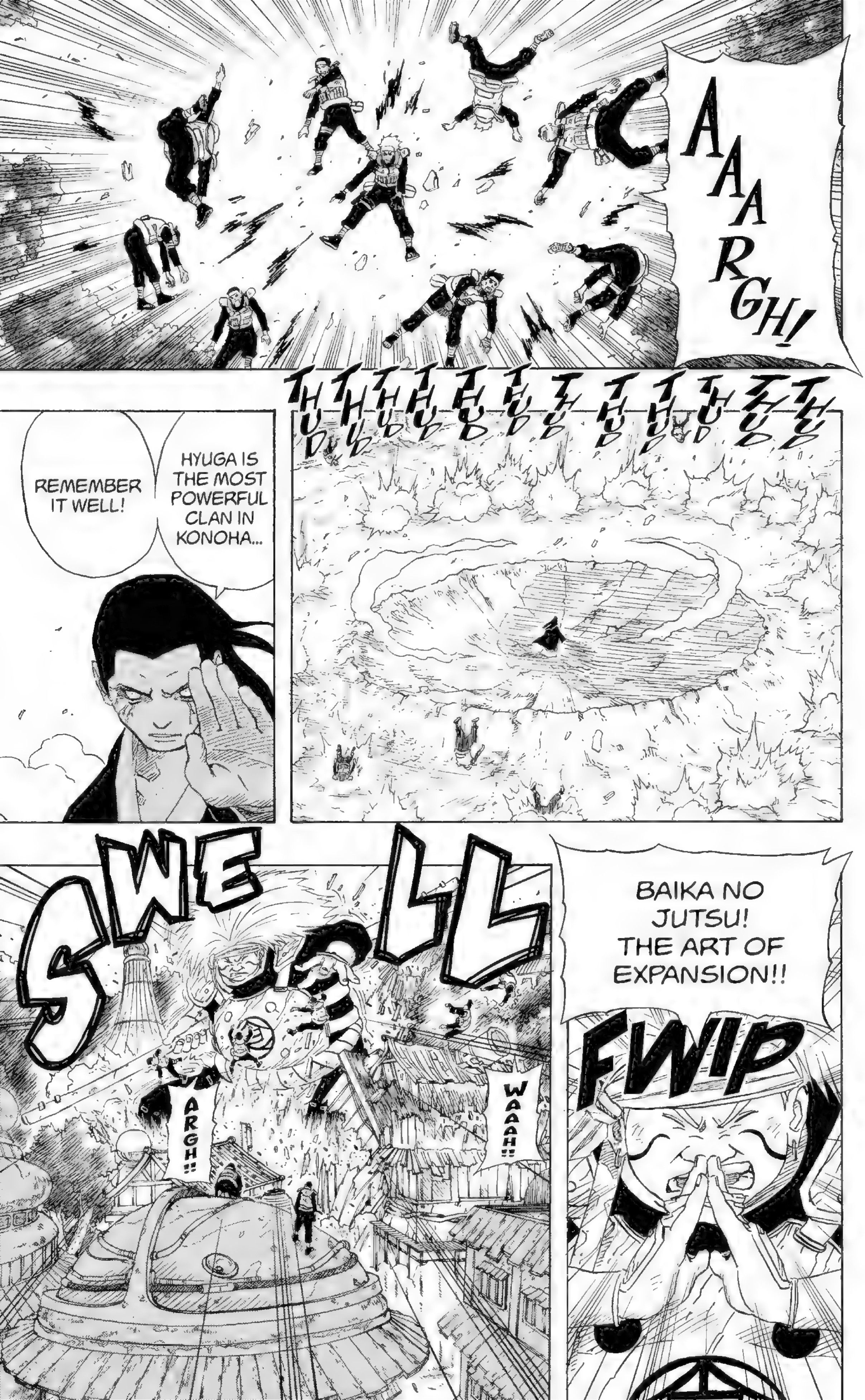
READ THIS WAY

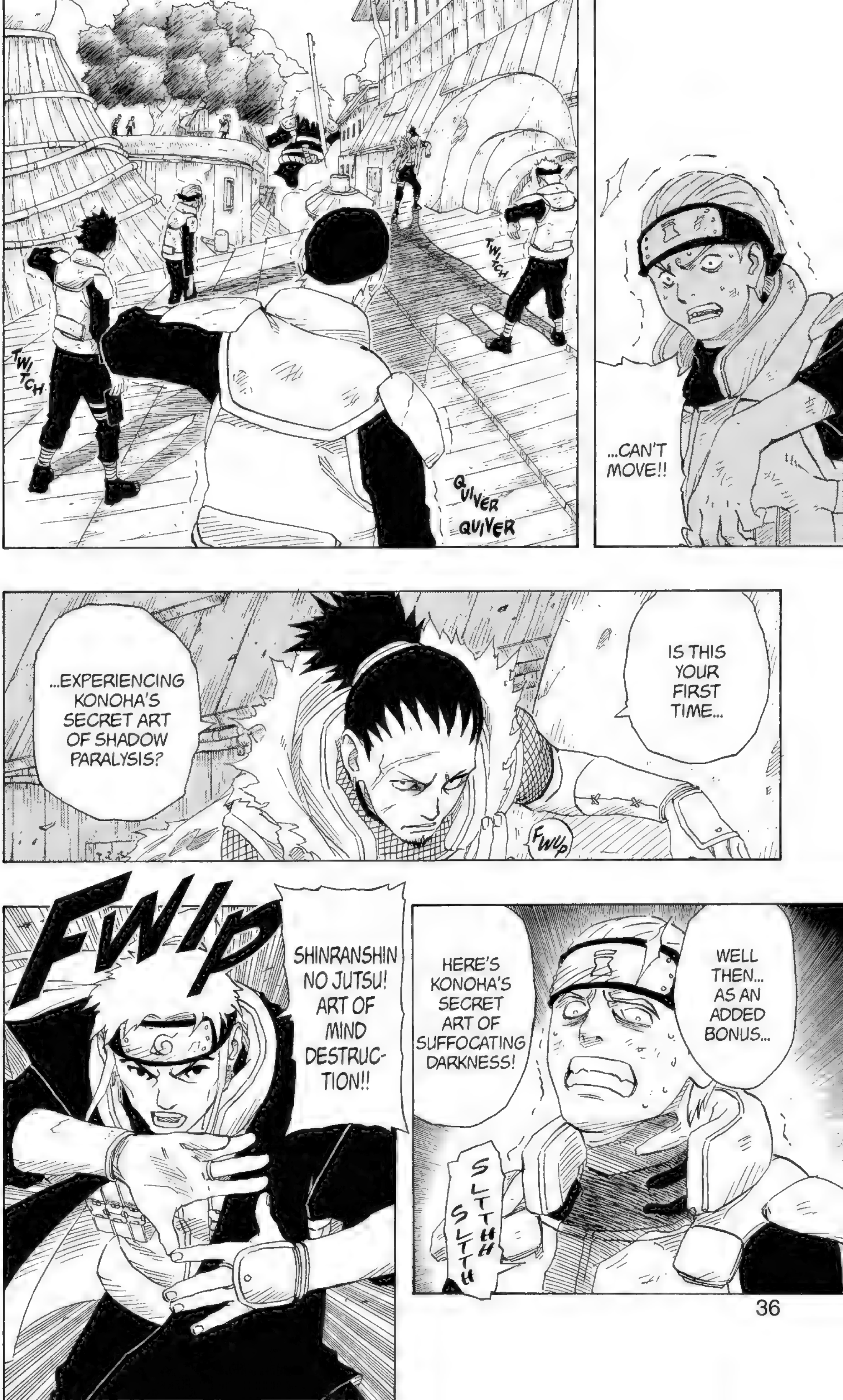


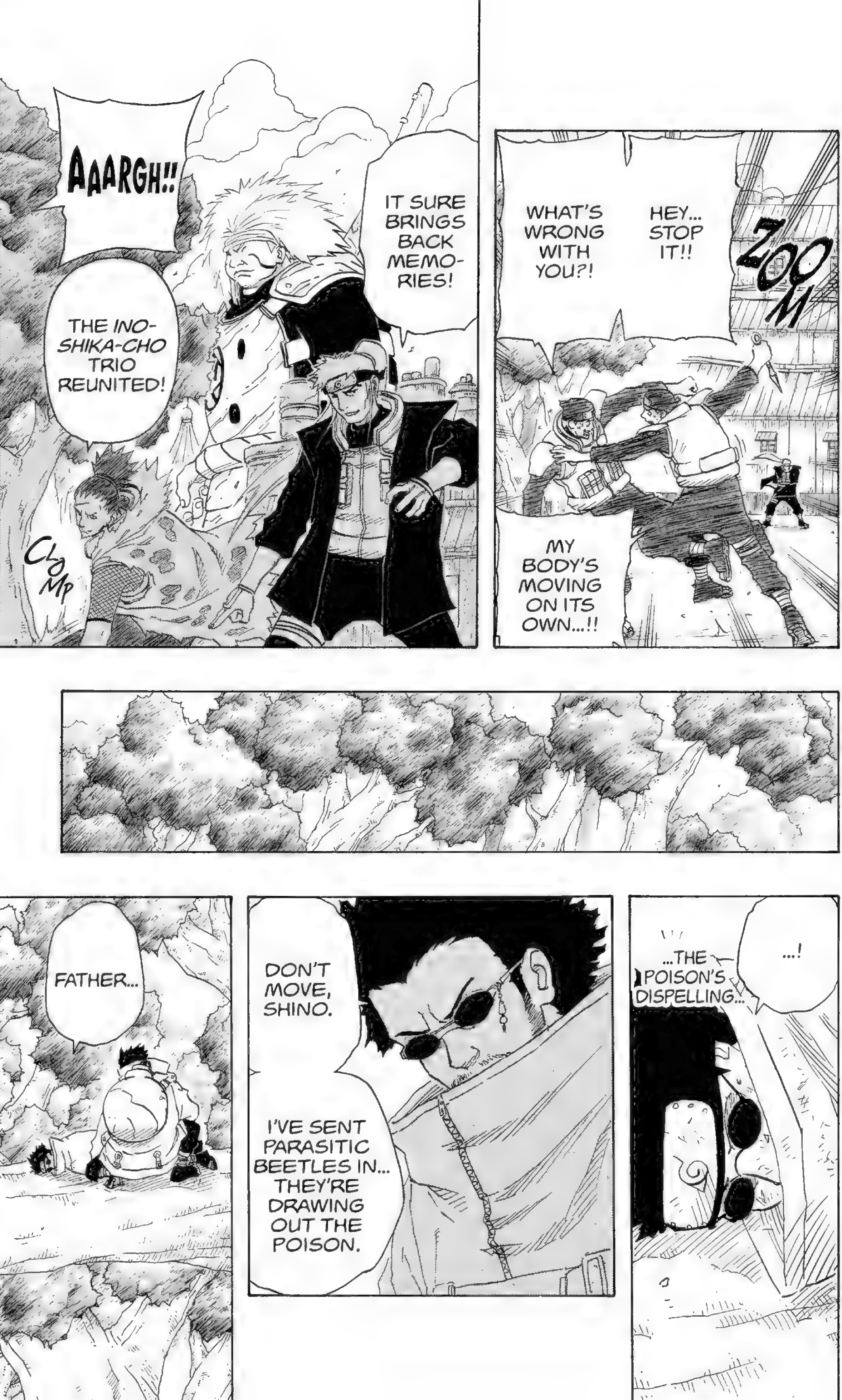

I SWEAR TO AVENGE YOU.
SLLLP
LET'S GO!
ROGER!!

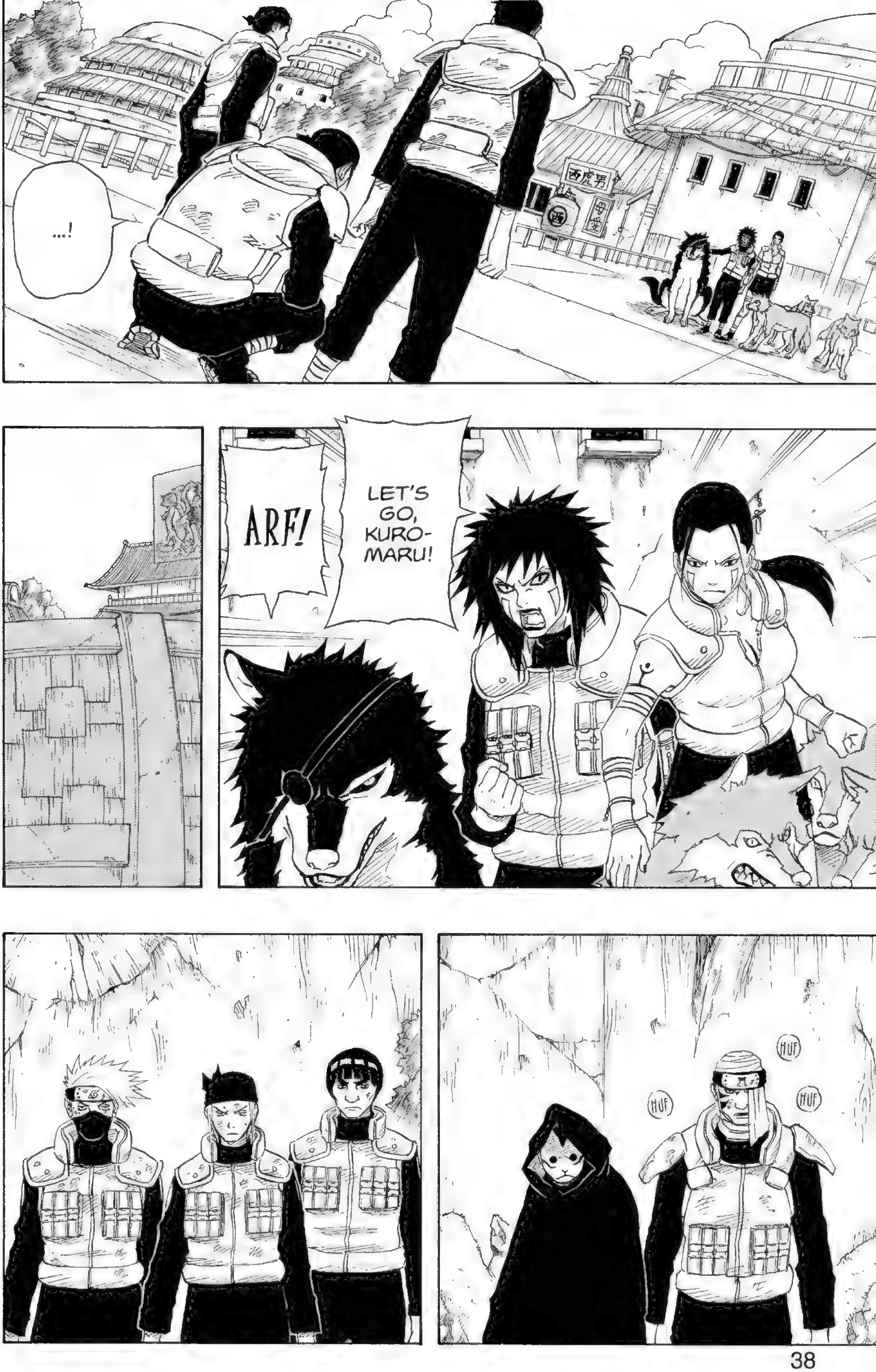
(*Gravestone: the names of Konoha's fallen heroes.)


WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
うつぼ　ミソノあさけ
のたいが　梅星にぎり
ジナ　月光ハヤテ

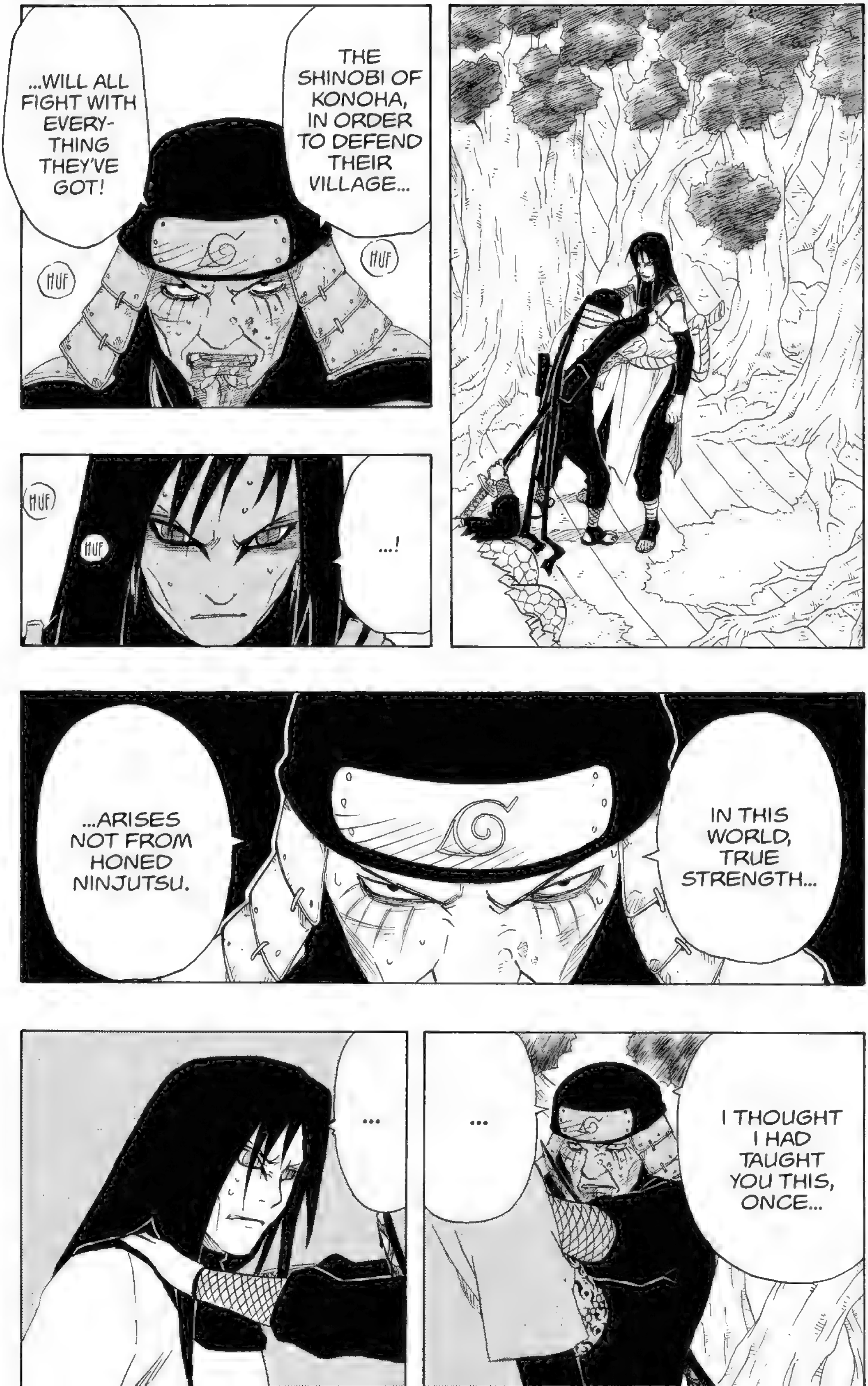

AAARGH!
THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD
HYUGA IS THE MOST POWERFUL CLAN IN KONOHA...
REMEMBER IT WELL!
BAIKA NO JUTSU! THE ART OF EXPANSION!!
FWIP
SWELL
WAAAH!!
ARGH!!

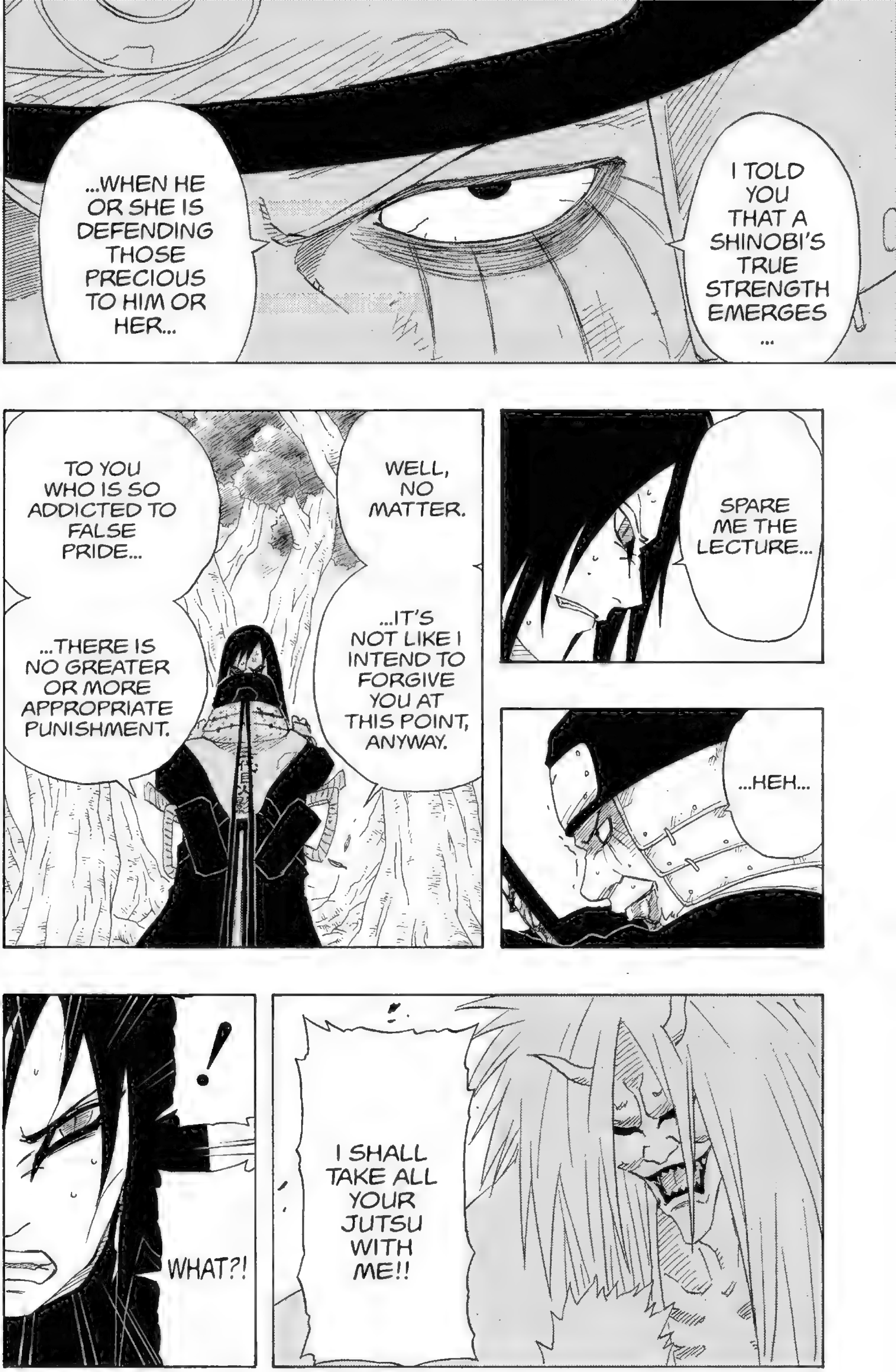

...CAN'T MOVE!!
TWITCH
TWITCH
QUIVER QUIVER
IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME...
...EXPERIENCING KONOHA'S SECRET ART OF SHADOW PARALYSIS?
FWUP
WELL THEN... AS AN ADDED BONUS...
HERE'S KONOHA'S SECRET ART OF SUFFOCATING DARKNESS!
SLTTHH
SLTTH
FWIP
SHINRANSHIN NO JUTSU! ART OF MIND DESTRUCTION!!

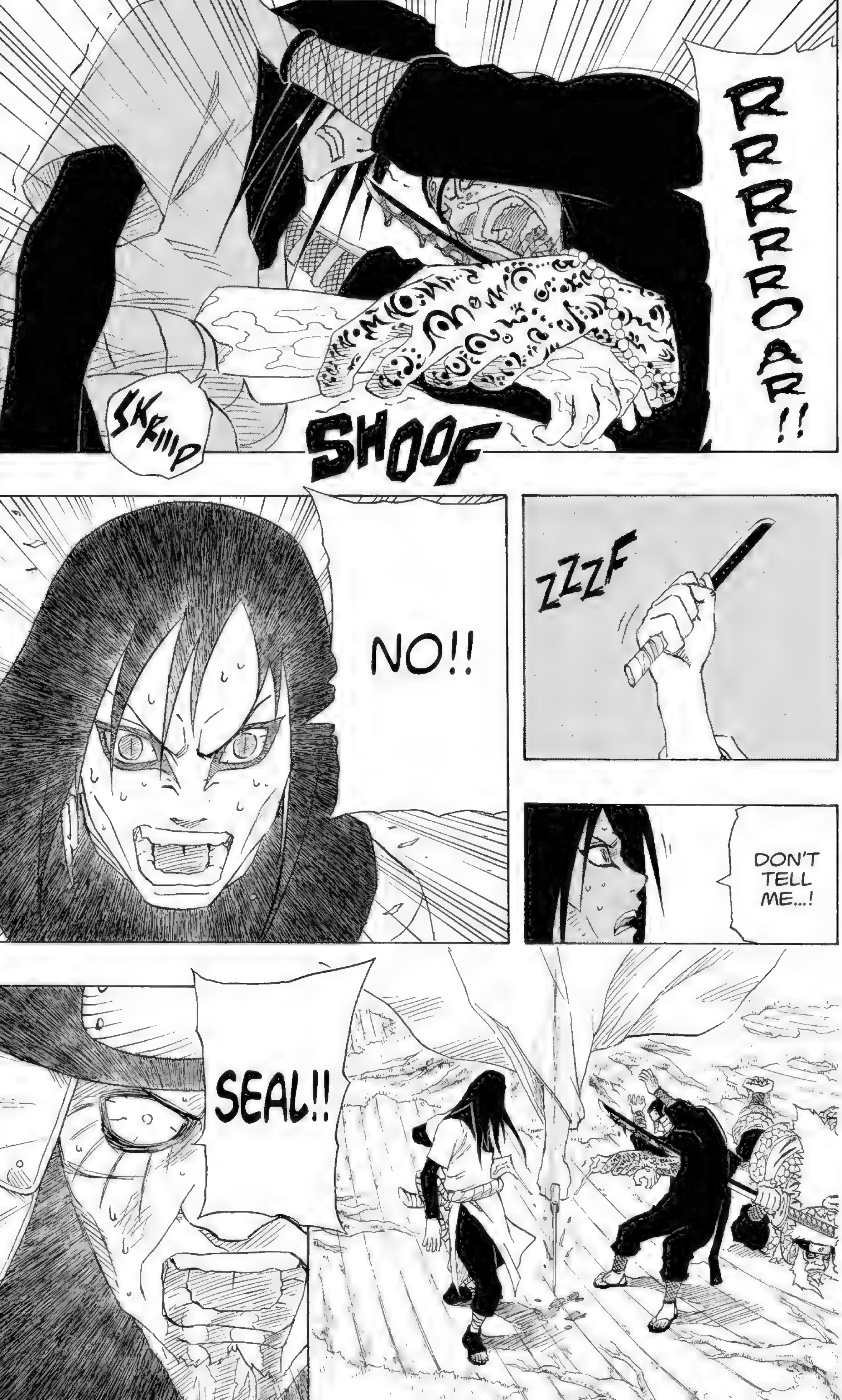

HEY... STOP IT!!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
ZOOM
MY BODY'S MOVING ON ITS OWN...!!
IT SURE BRINGS BACK MEMORIES!
AAARGH!!
THE INO-SHIKA-CHO TRIO REUNITED!
CLOMP
...!
...THE POISON'S DISPELLING...
DON'T MOVE, SHINO.
I'VE SENT PARASITIC BEETLES IN... THEY'RE DRAWING OUT THE POISON.
FATHER...

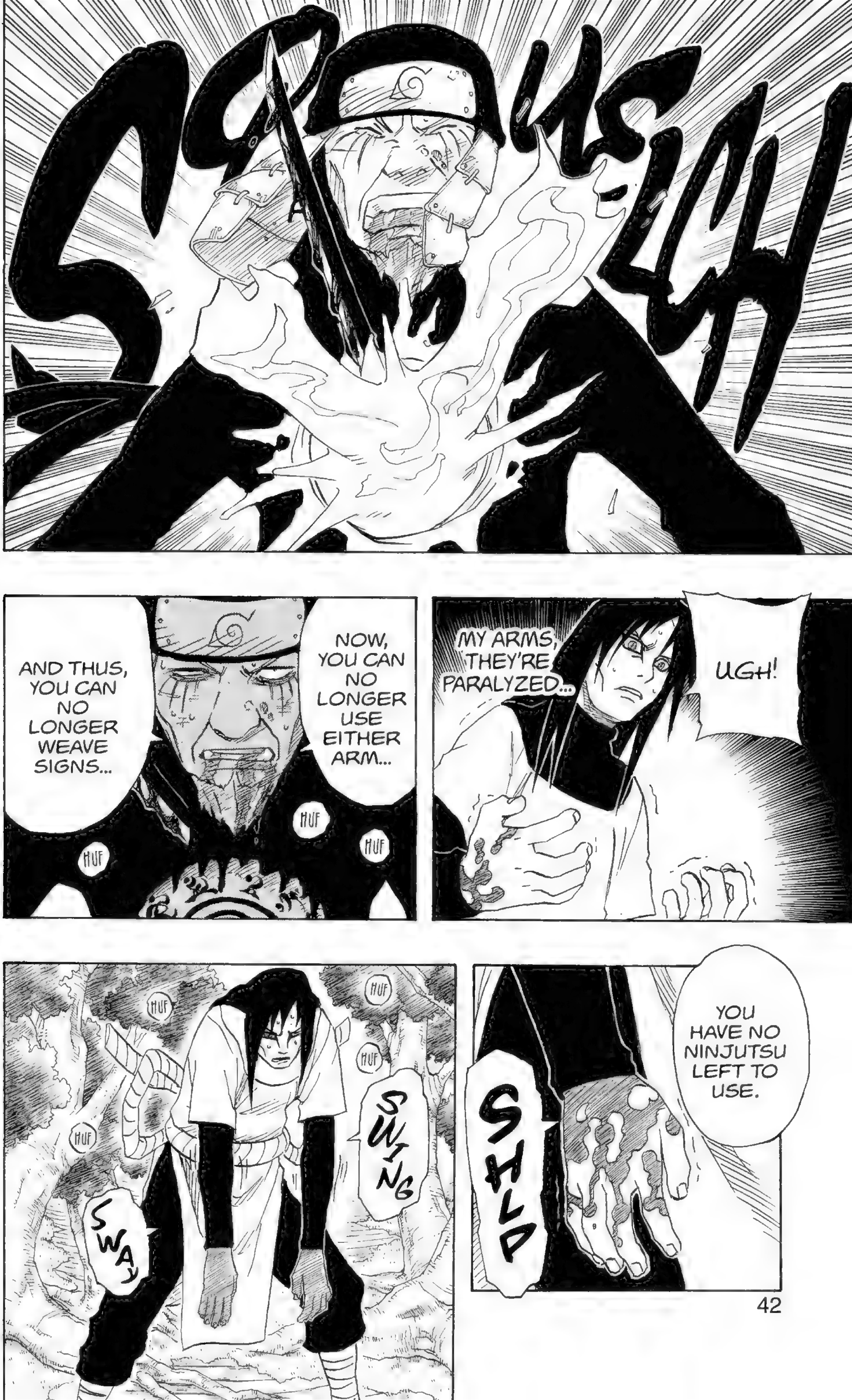

...!
LET'S GO, KUROMARU!
ARF!
HUF
HUF
HUF

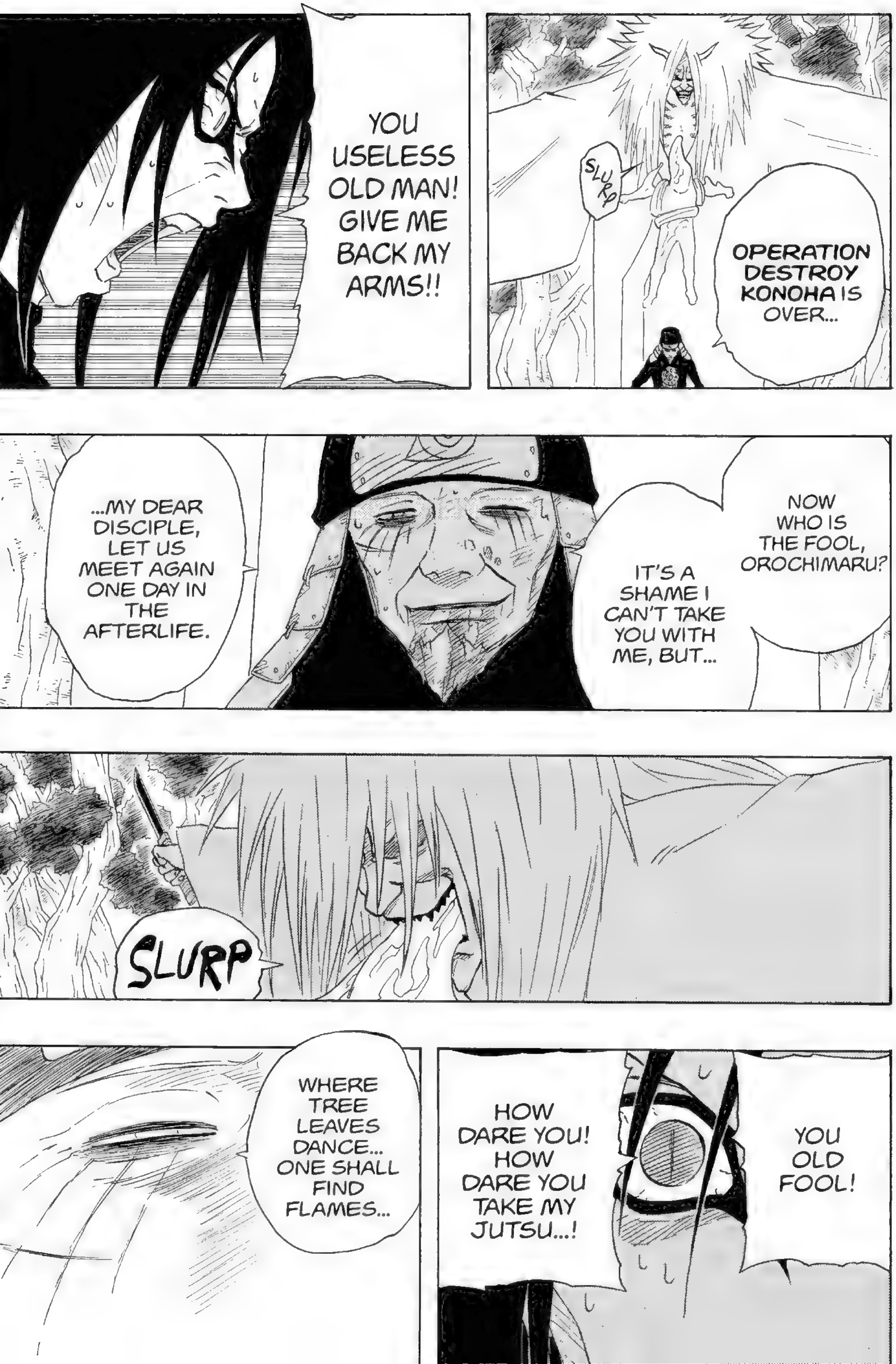
READ THIS WAY

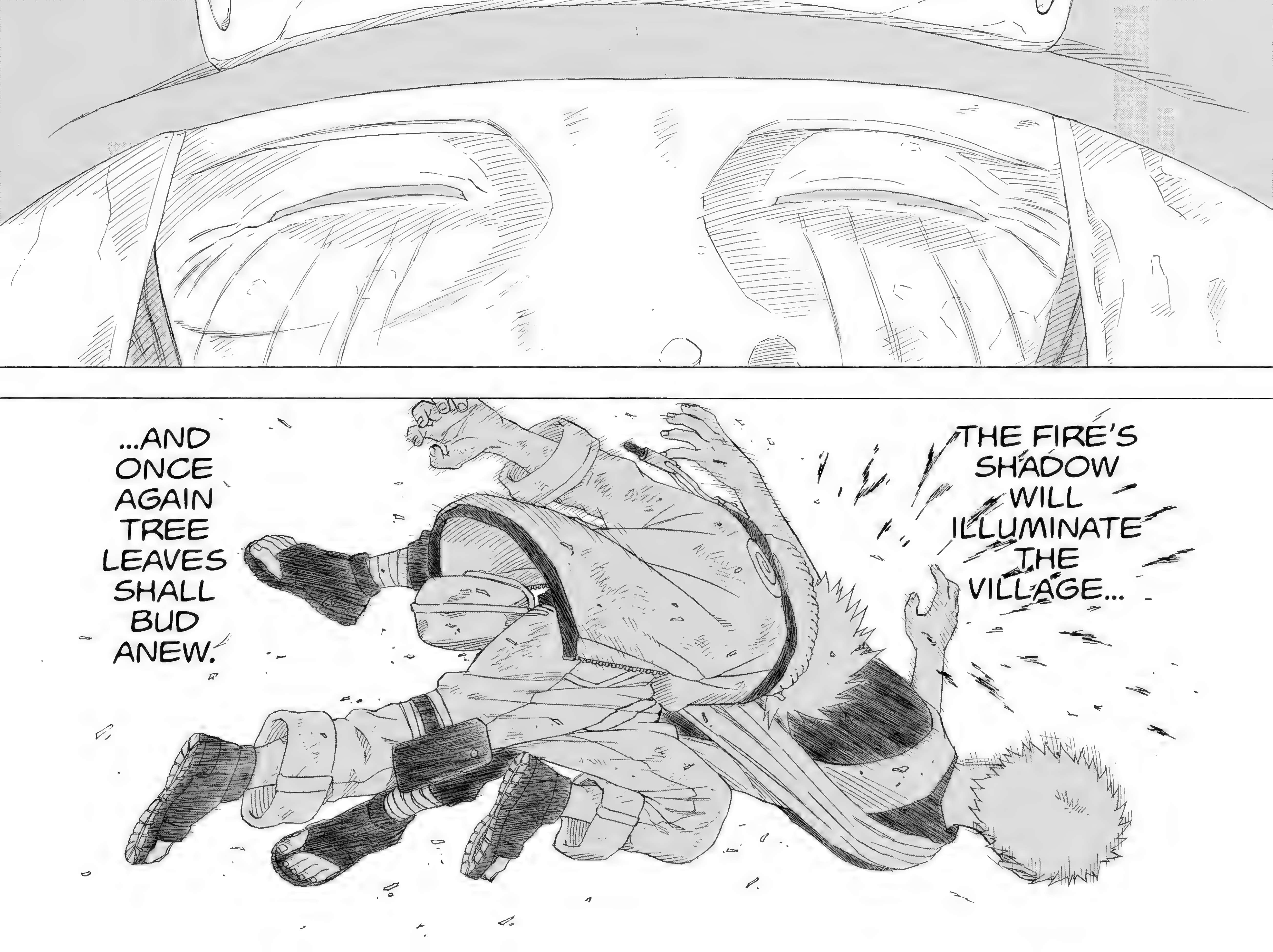

THE SHINOBI OF KONOHA, IN ORDER TO DEFEND THEIR VILLAGE...
...WILL ALL FIGHT WITH EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT!
HUF
HUF
...!
HUF
HUF
IN THIS WORLD, TRUE STRENGTH...
...ARISES NOT FROM HONED NINJUTSU.
I THOUGHT I HAD TAUGHT YOU THIS, ONCE...
...
...


I TOLD YOU THAT A SHINOBI'S TRUE STRENGTH EMERGES...
...WHEN HE OR SHE IS DEFENDING THOSE PRECIOUS TO HIM OR HER...
SPARE ME THE LECTURE...
...HEH...
WELL, NO MATTER.
...IT'S NOT LIKE I INTEND TO FORGIVE YOU AT THIS POINT, ANYWAY.
TO YOU WHO IS SO ADDICTED TO FALSE PRIDE...
...THERE IS NO GREATER OR MORE APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT.
I SHALL TAKE ALL YOUR JUTSU WITH ME!!
!
WHAT?!


RRRRROAR!!
SHOOF
SKRIIP
ZZZF
DON'T TELL ME...!
NO!!
SEAL!!

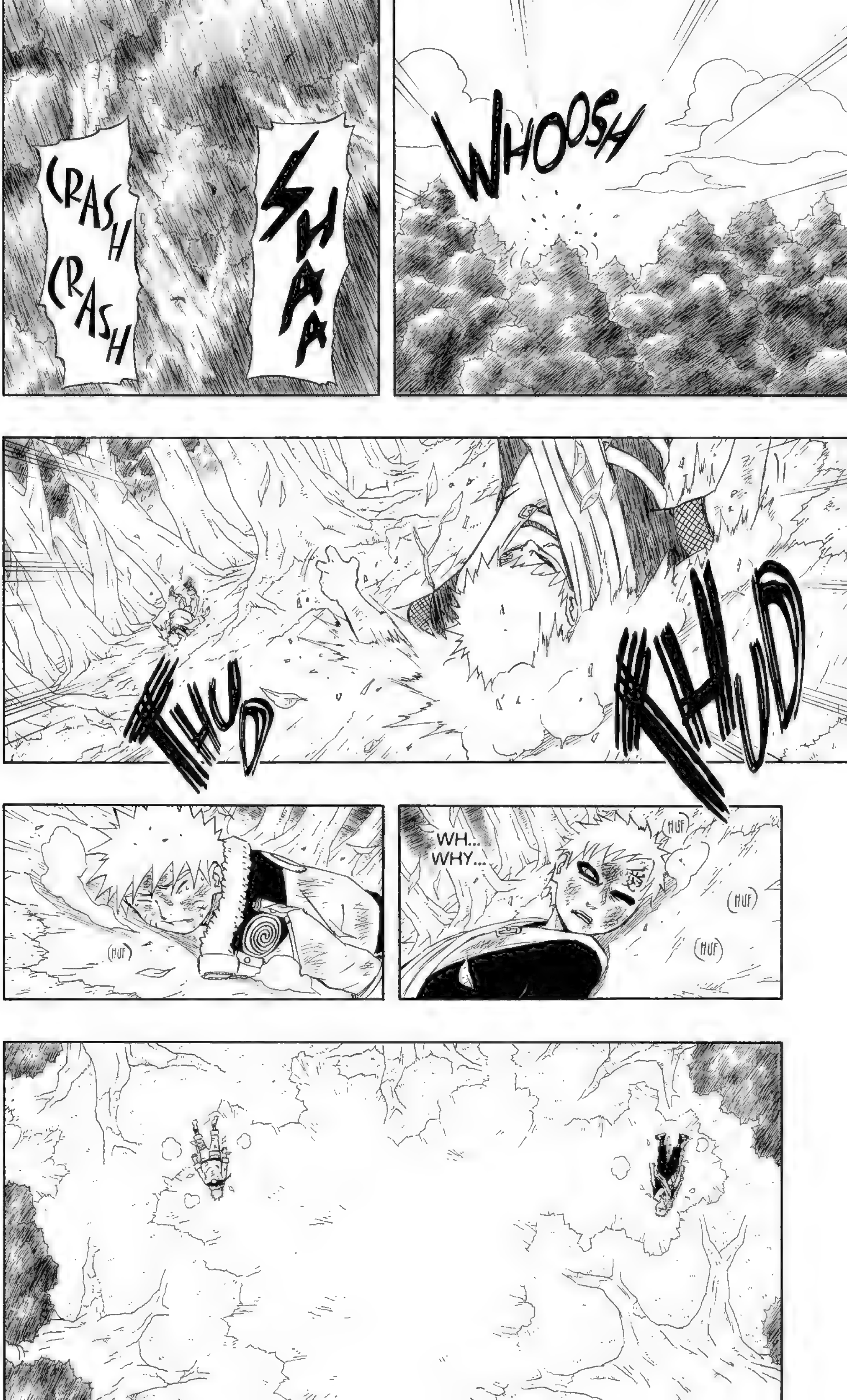

SQUELCH
UGH!
MY ARMS, THEY'RE PARALYZED...
NOW, YOU CAN NO LONGER USE EITHER ARM...
AND THUS, YOU CAN NO LONGER WEAVE SIGNS...
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU HAVE NO NINJUTSU LEFT TO USE.
SHLP
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
SWING
SWAY


OPERATION DESTROY KONOHA IS OVER...
SLURP
YOU USELESS OLD MAN! GIVE ME BACK MY ARMS!!
NOW WHO IS THE FOOL, OROCHIMARU?
IT'S A SHAME I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH ME, BUT...
...MY DEAR DISCIPLE, LET US MEET AGAIN ONE DAY IN THE AFTERLIFE.
SLURP
YOU OLD FOOL!
HOW DARE YOU! HOW DARE YOU TAKE MY JUTSU...!
WHERE TREE LEAVES DANCE... ONE SHALL FIND FLAMES...

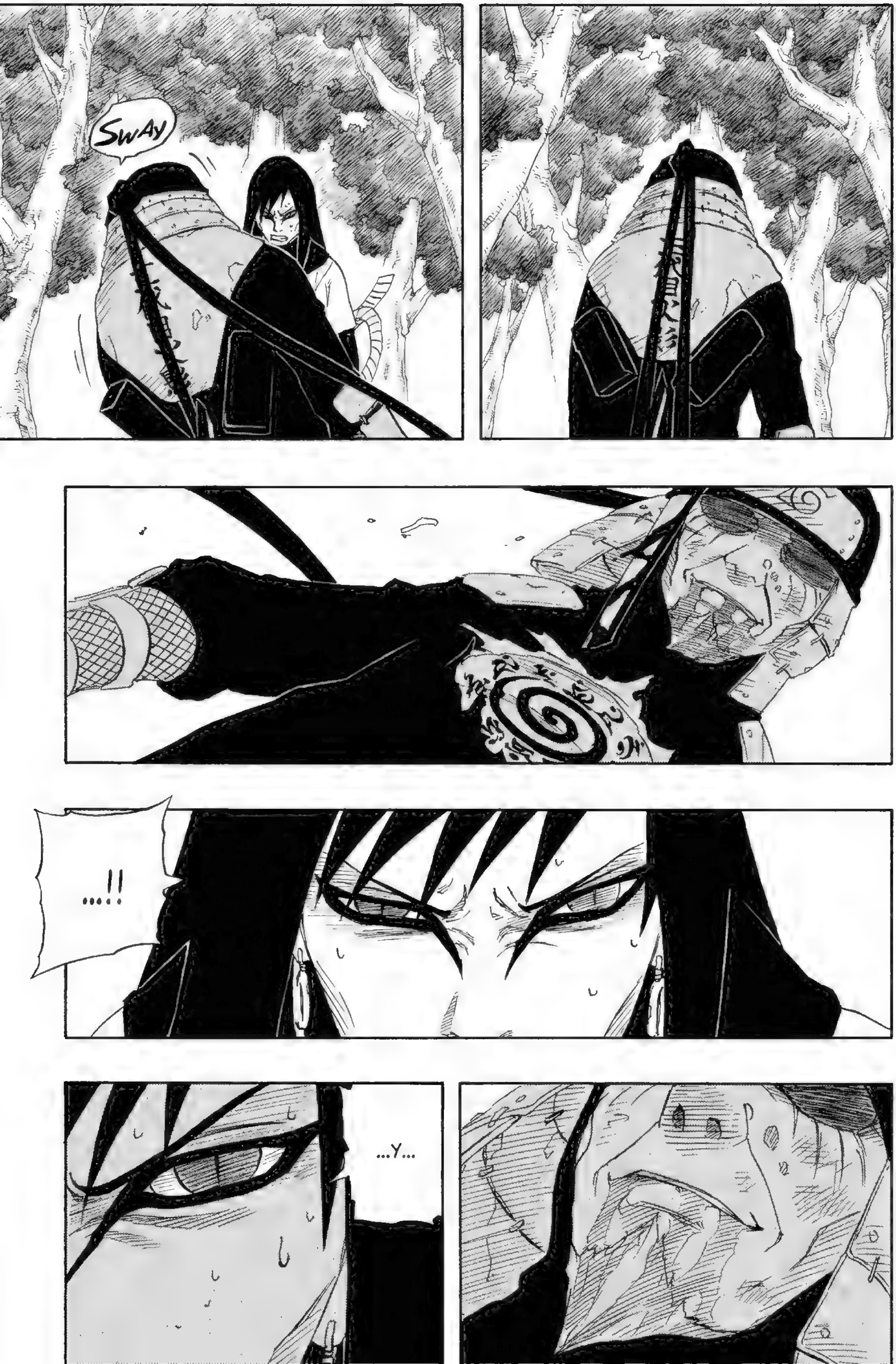

THE FIRE'S SHADOW WILL ILLUMINATE THE VILLAGE...
...AND ONCE AGAIN TREE LEAVES SHALL BUD ANEW.

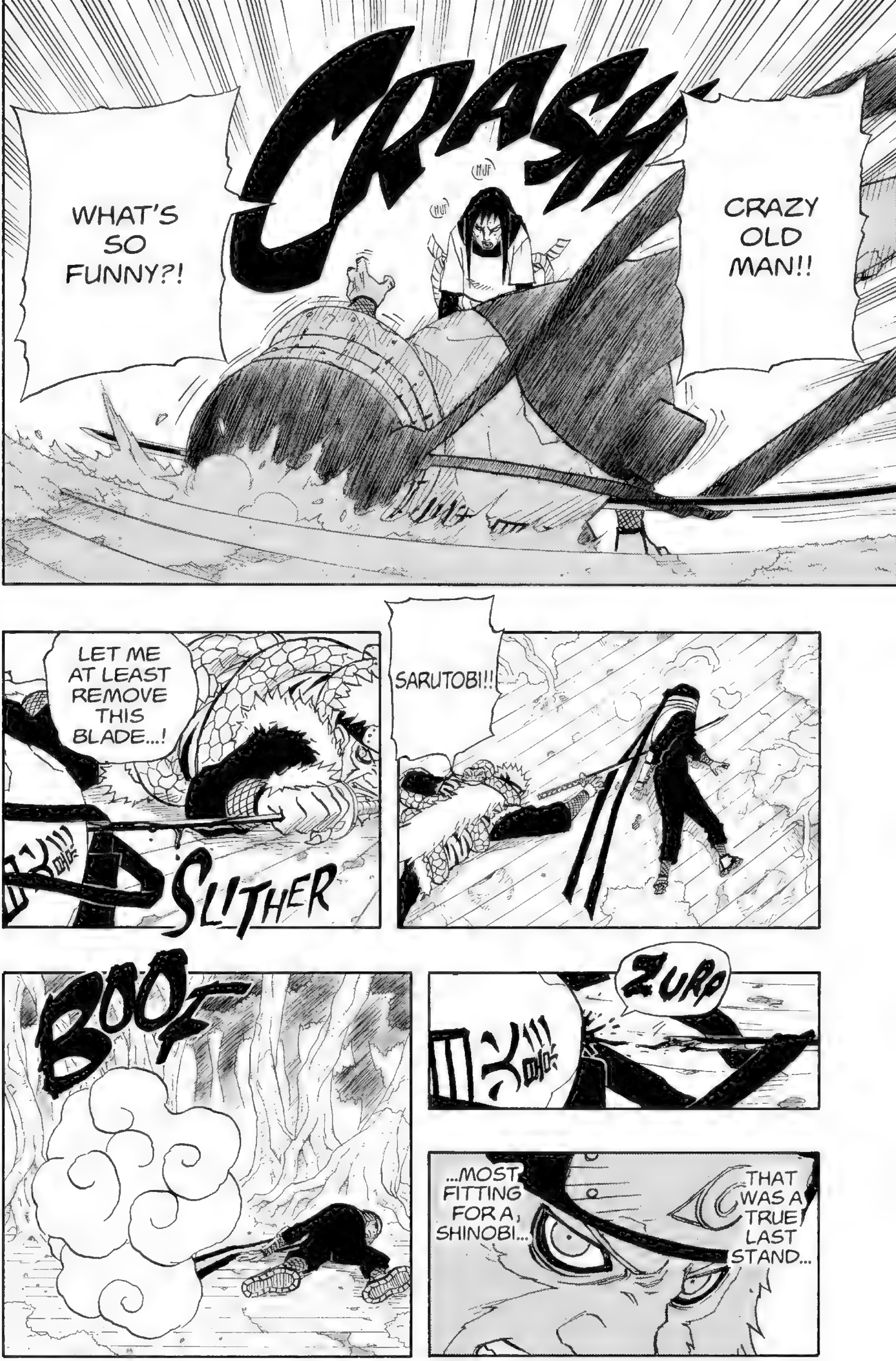
# Number 138:

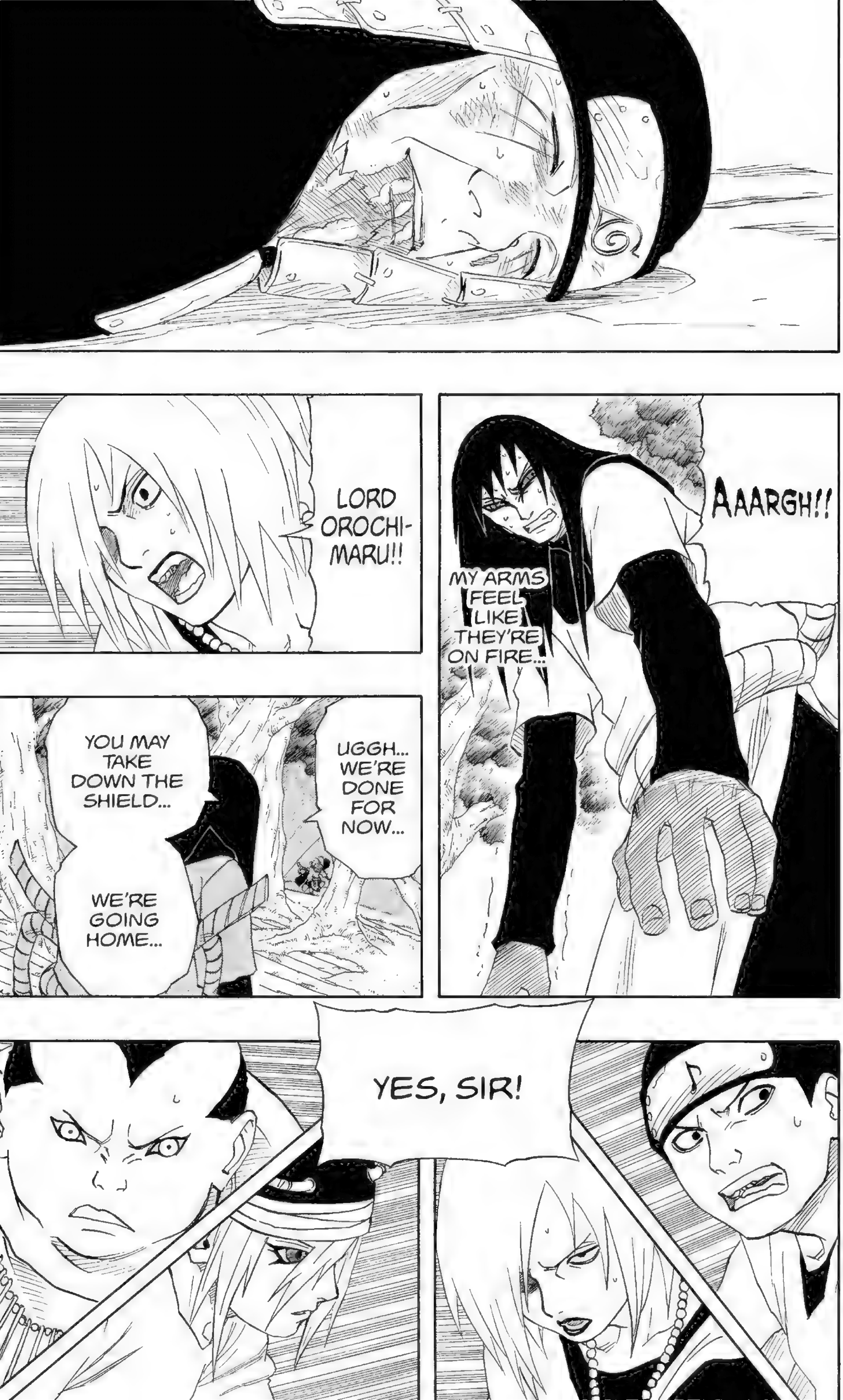
# Operation Destroy Konoha, Terminated!!

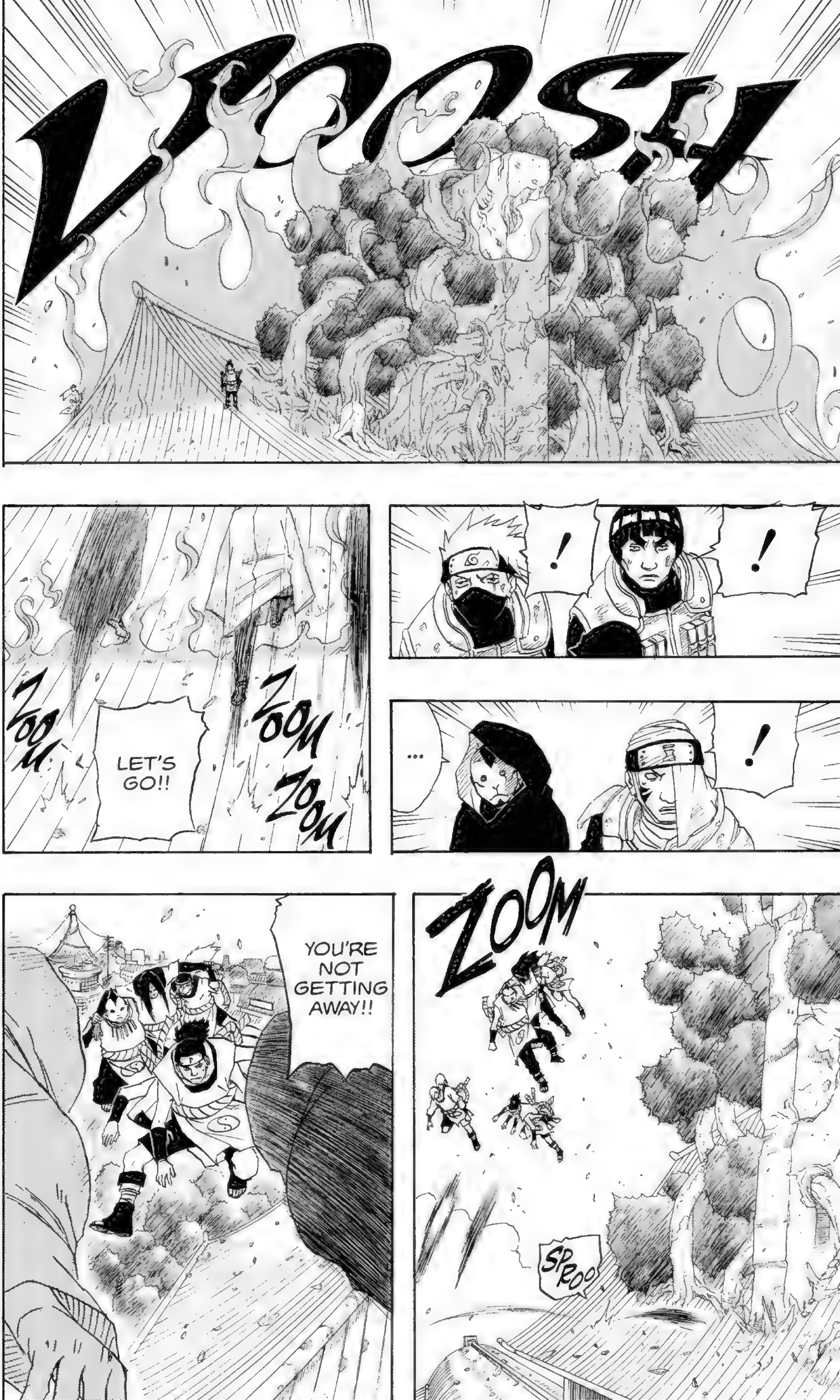

WHOOSH
SHAA
CRASH CRASH
THUD
THUD
(HUF)
(HUF)
(HUF)
WH... WHY...
(HUF)

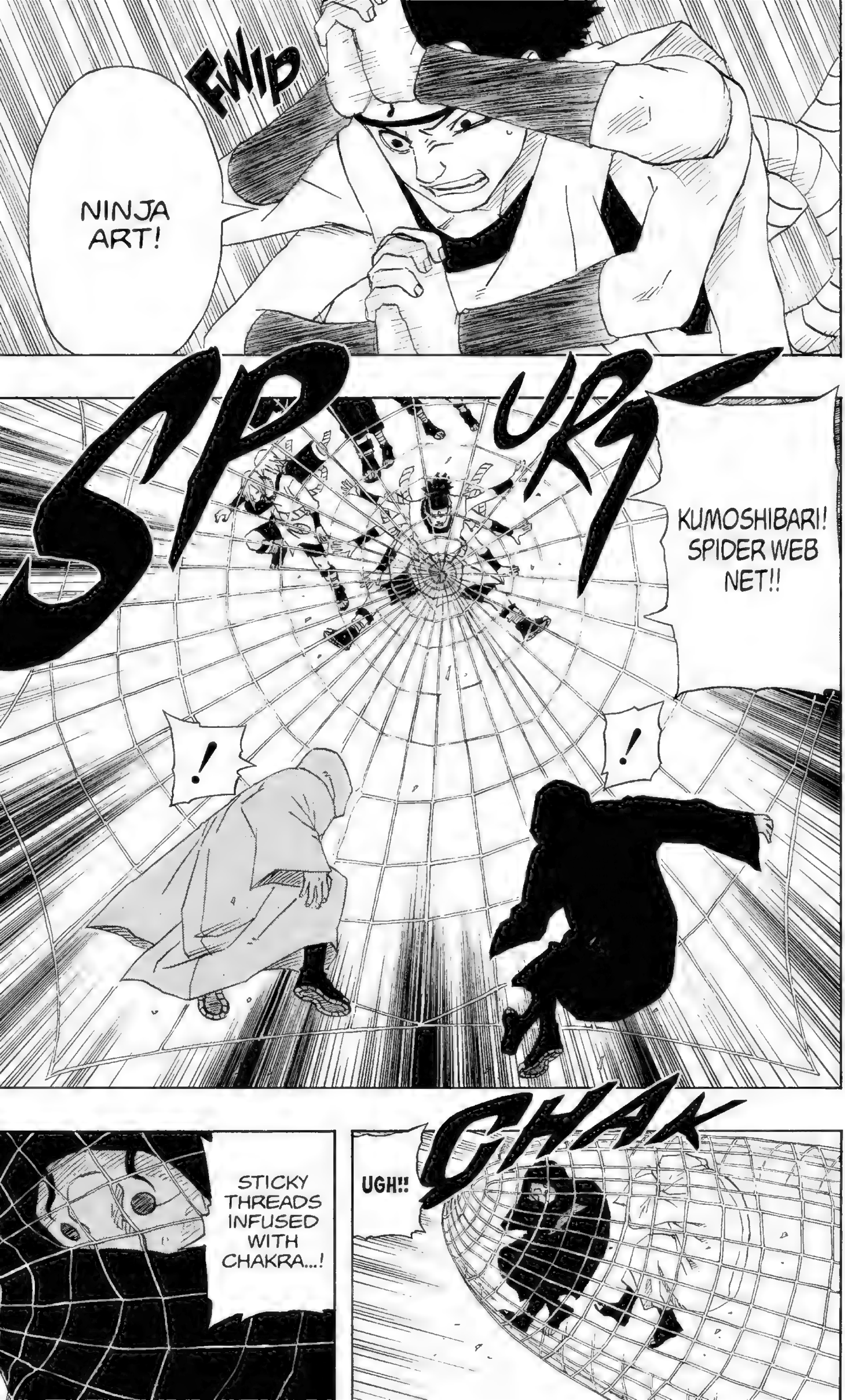
READ THIS WAY

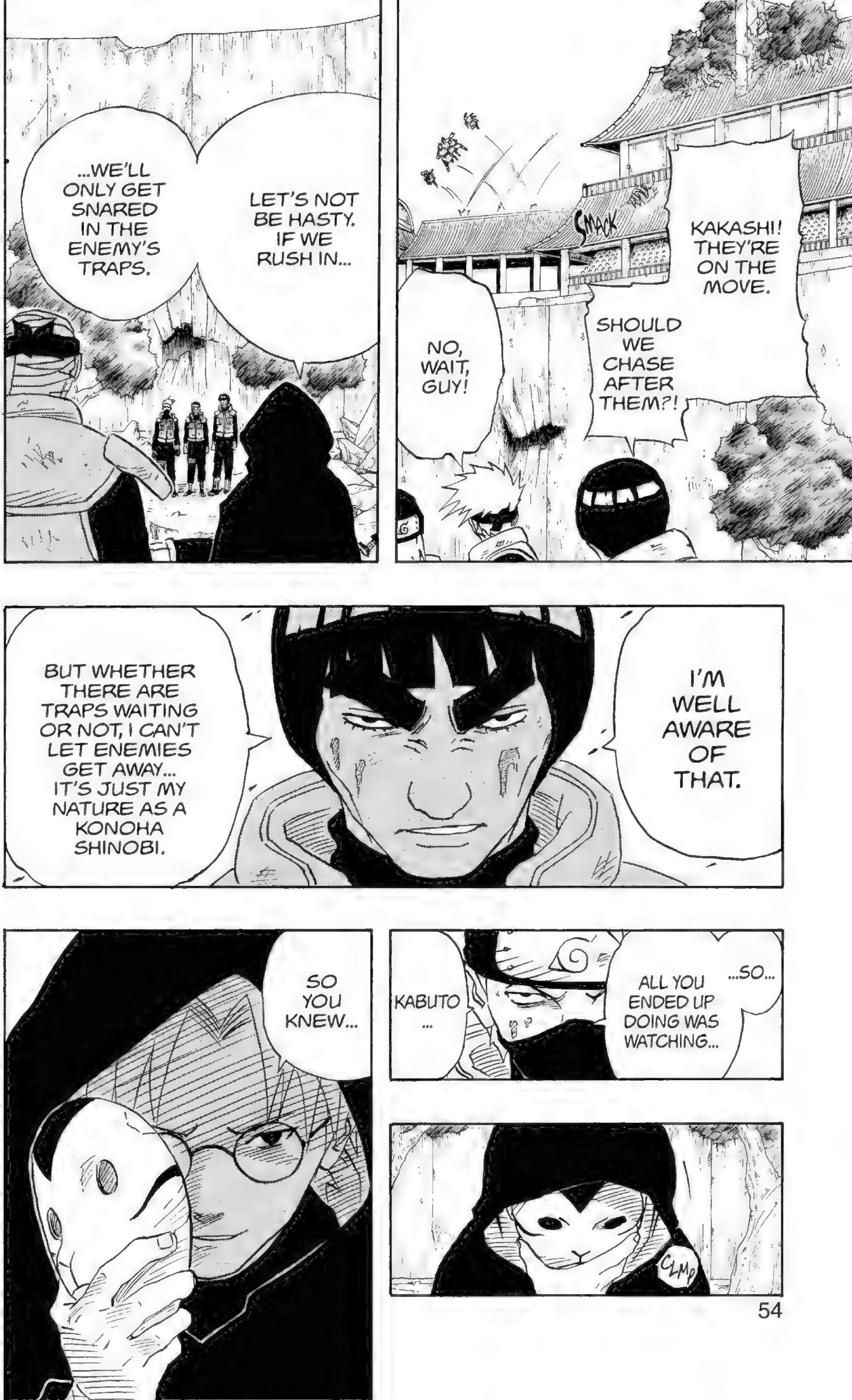



CRASH
HUF
HUF
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!
CRAZY OLD MAN!!
LET ME AT LEAST REMOVE THIS BLADE...!
SLITHER
SARUTOBI!!!
BOOF
ZURP
THAT WAS A TRUE LAST STAND...
...MOST FITTING FOR A, SHINOBI...

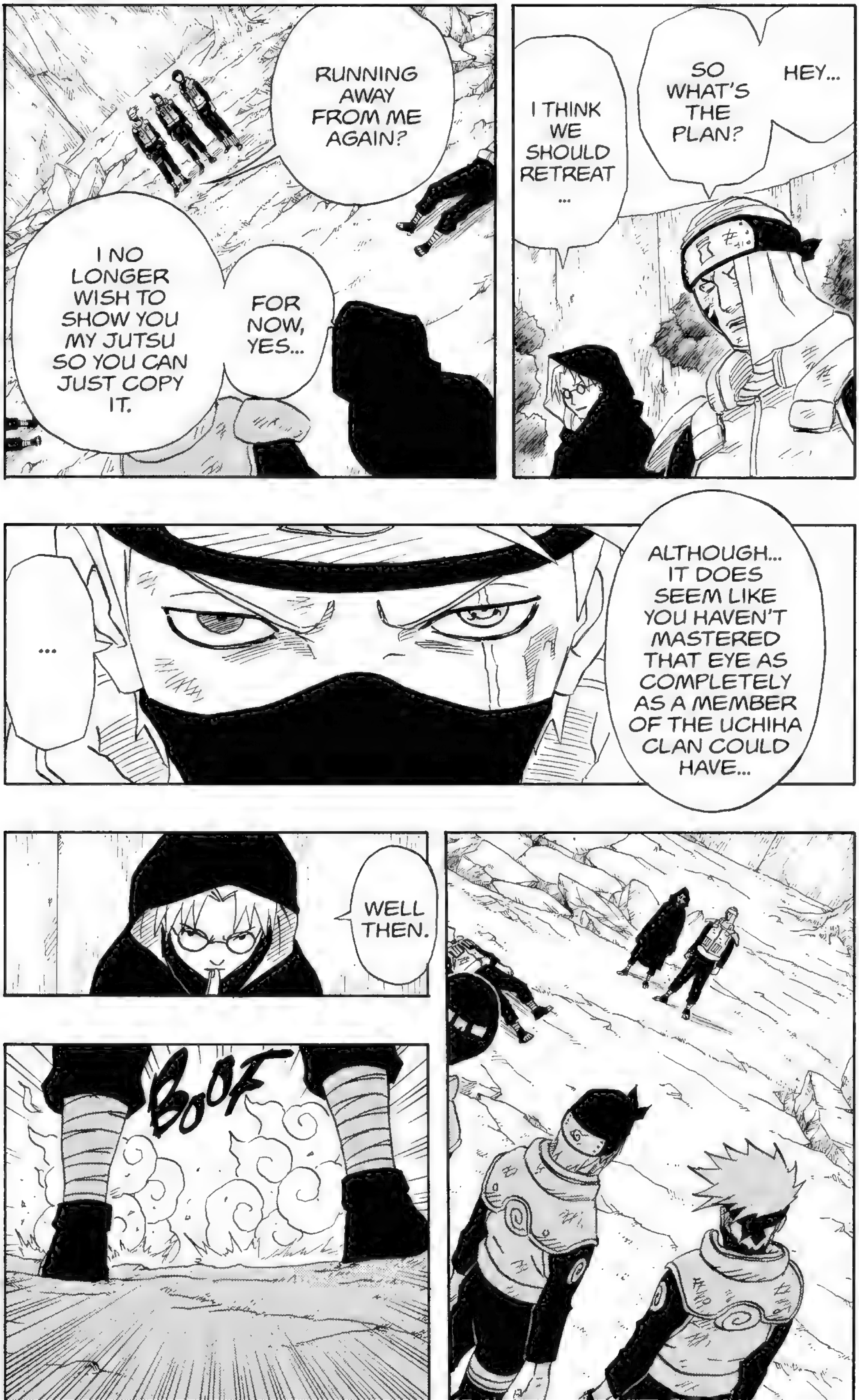

AAARGH!!
MY ARMS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE ON FIRE...
LORD OROCHIMARU!!
UGGH... WE'RE DONE FOR NOW...
YOU MAY TAKE DOWN THE SHIELD...
WE'RE GOING HOME...
YES, SIR!

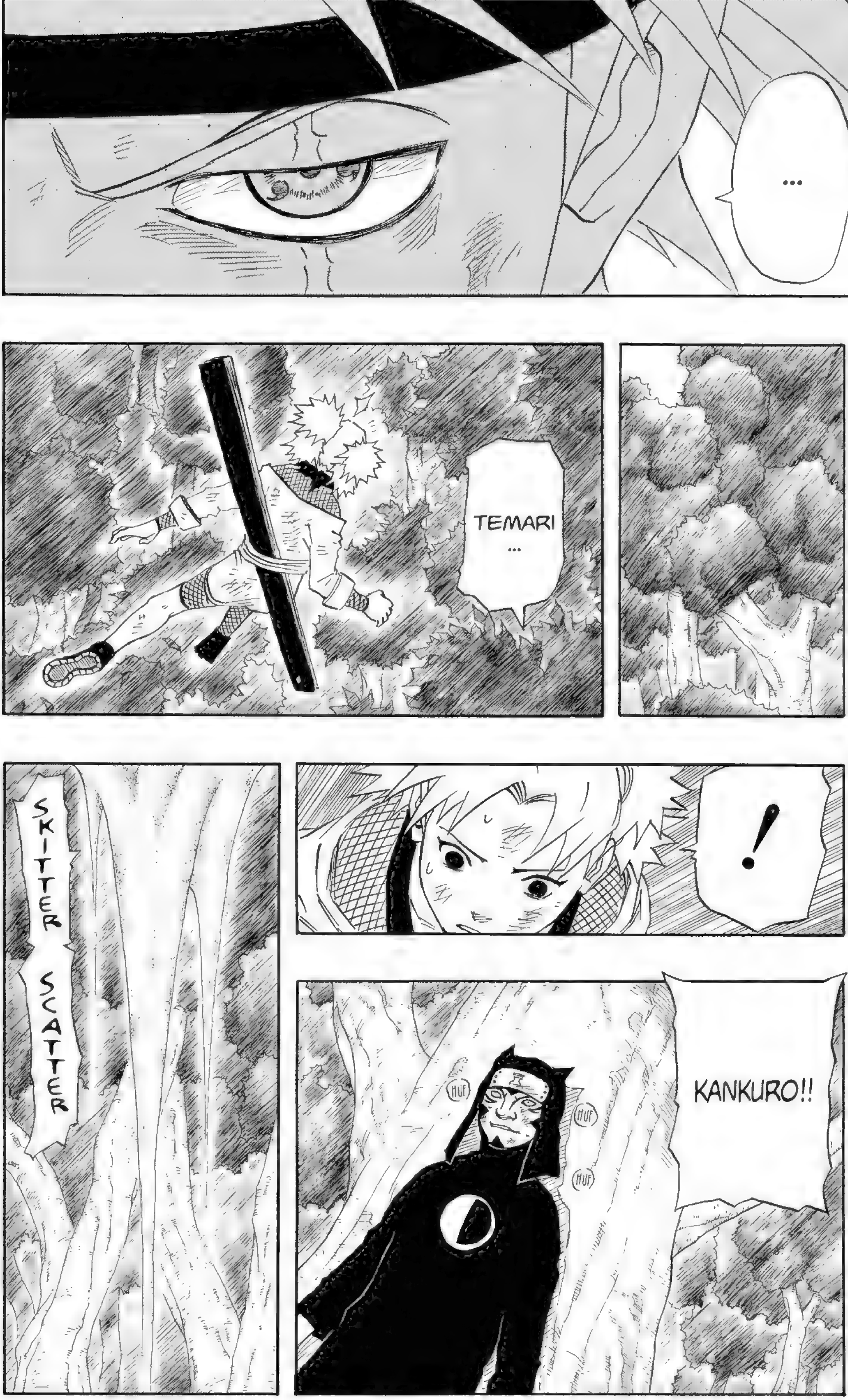

VROOSH
!
!
...
!
ZOOM
ZOOM ZOOM
LET'S GO!!
ZOOM
ZOOM
SPROO
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!!

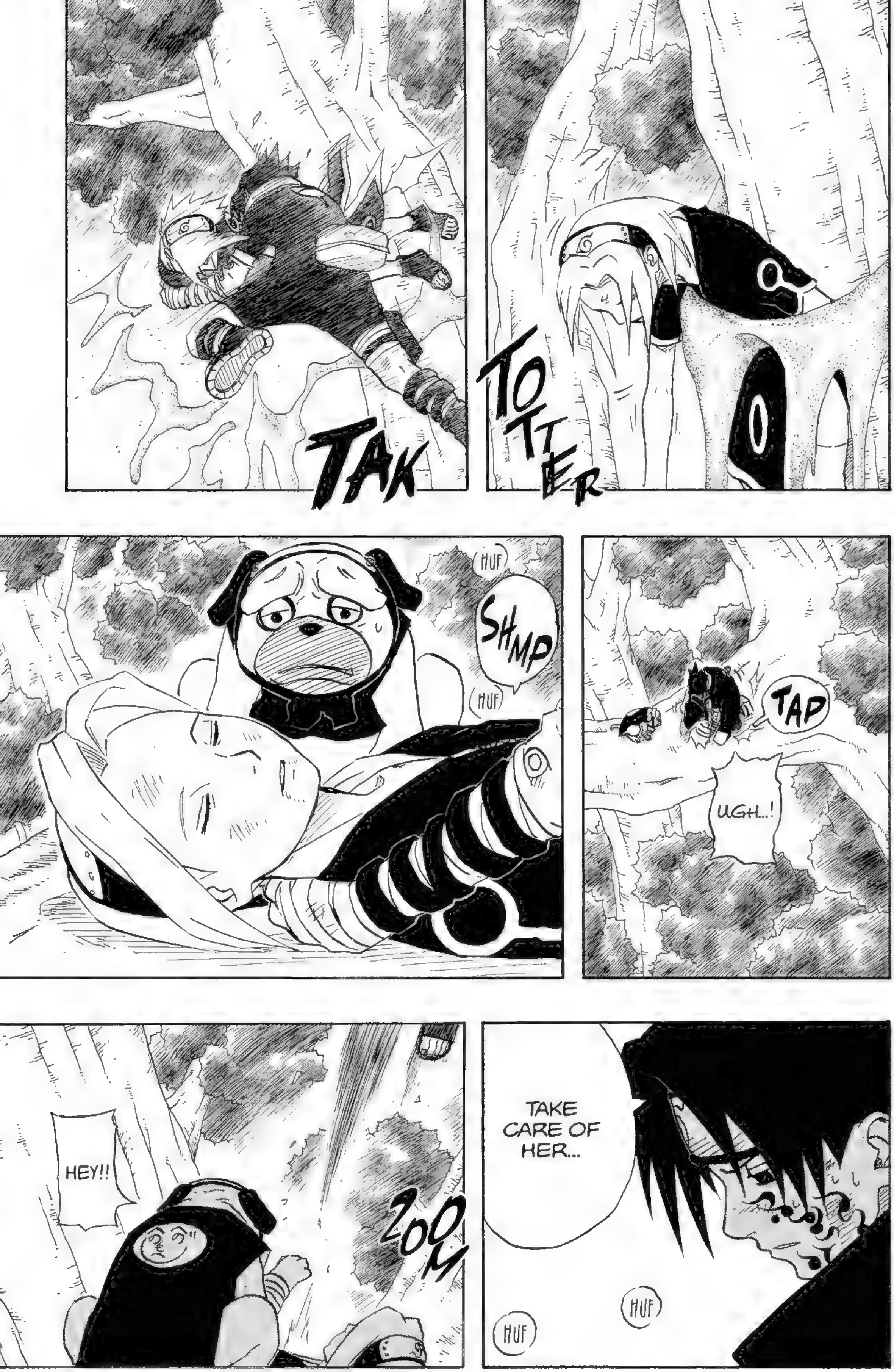

FWIP
NINJA ART!
SPURT
KUMOSHIBARI! SPIDER WEB NET!!
!
!
CHAK
UGH!!
STICKY THREADS INFUSED WITH CHAKRA...!

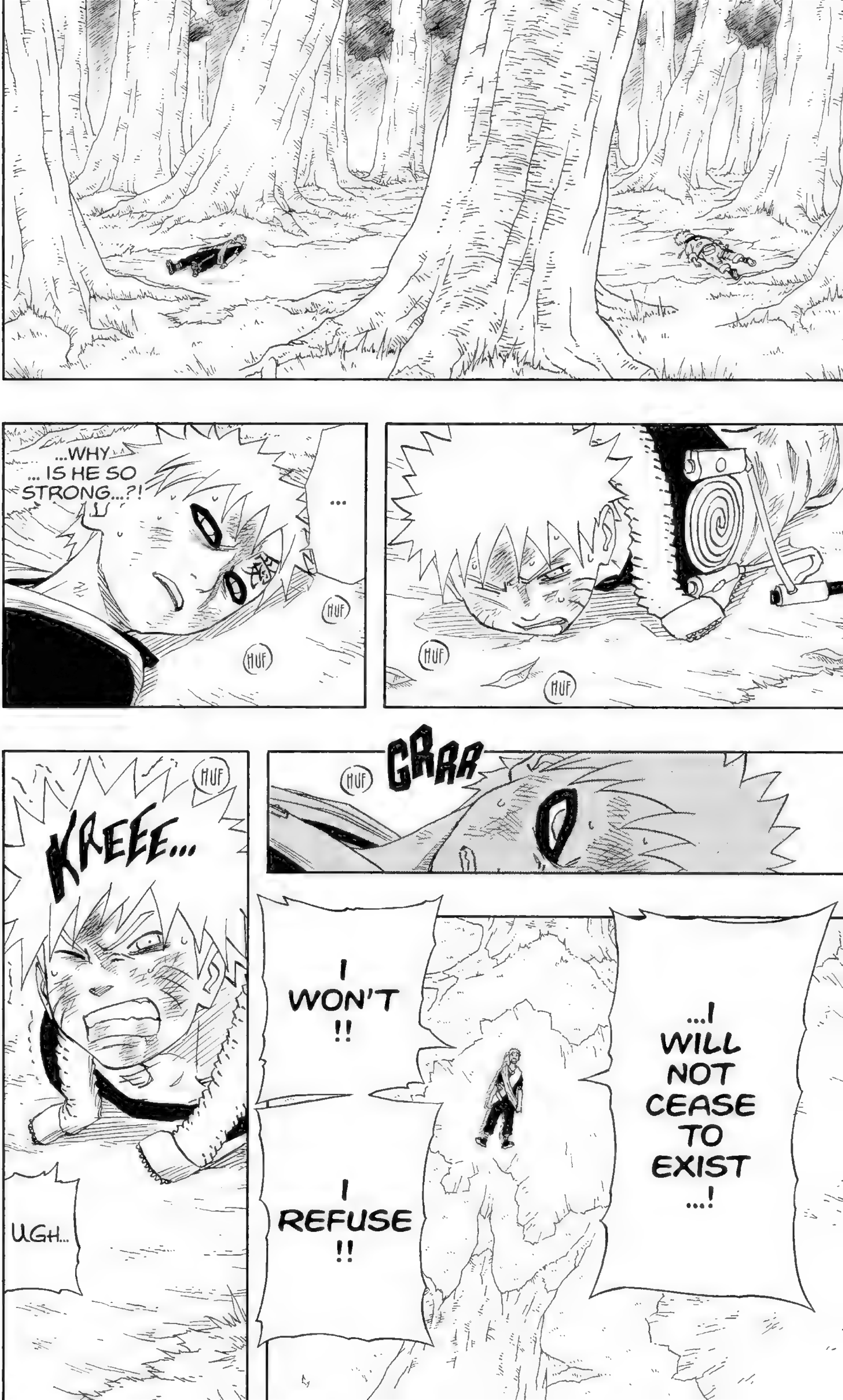

KAKASHI! THEY'RE ON THE MOVE.
SMACK
SHOULD WE CHASE AFTER THEM?!
NO, WAIT, GUY!
LET'S NOT BE HASTY. IF WE RUSH IN...
...WE'LL ONLY GET SNARED IN THE ENEMY'S TRAPS.
I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT.
BUT WHETHER THERE ARE TRAPS WAITING OR NOT, I CAN'T LET ENEMIES GET AWAY... IT'S JUST MY NATURE AS A KONOHA SHINOBI.
...SO...
ALL YOU ENDED UP DOING WAS WATCHING...
KABUTO ...
CLMP
SO YOU KNEW...

READ THIS WAY

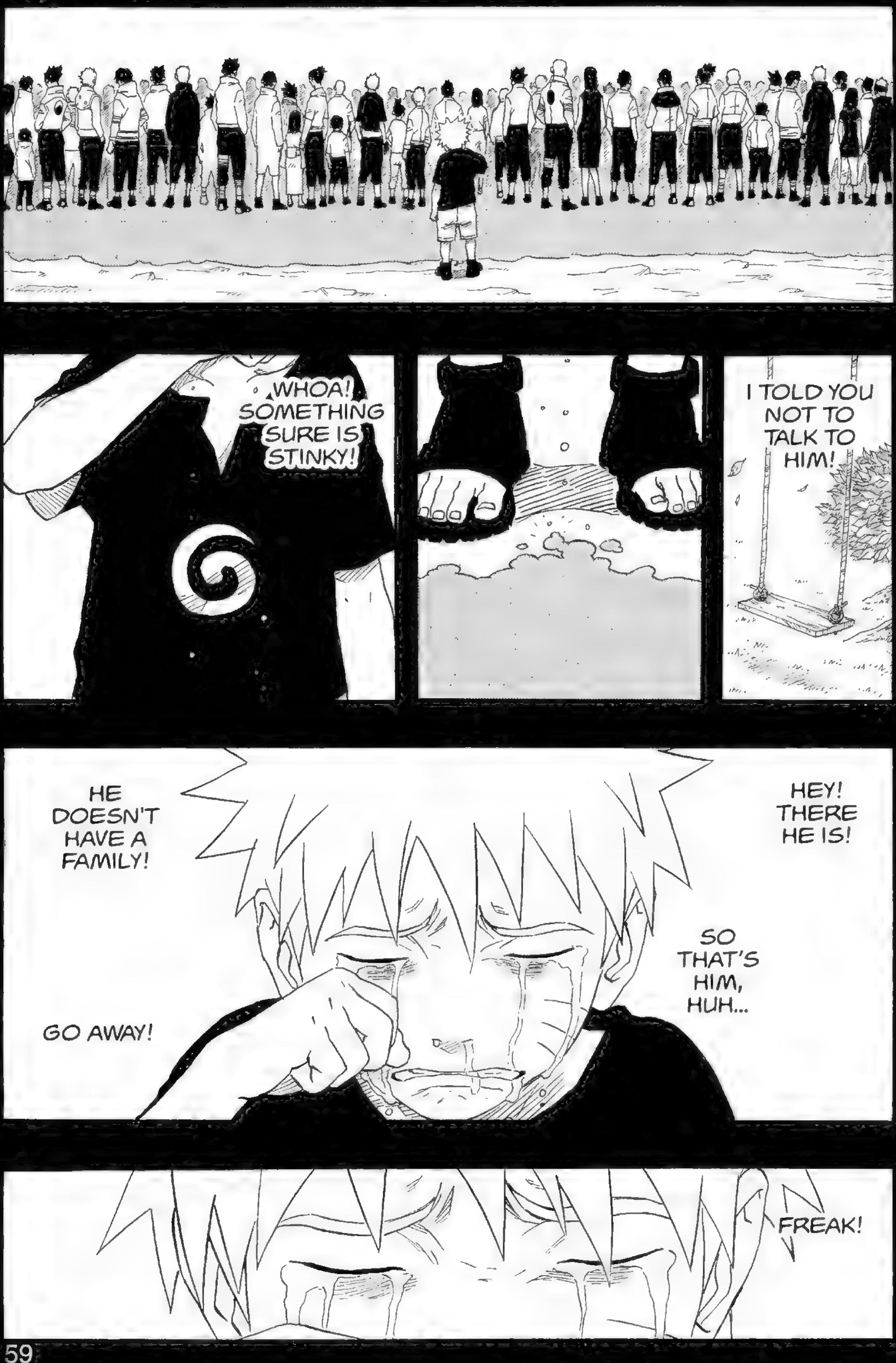

HEY...
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?
I THINK WE SHOULD RETREAT ...
RUNNING AWAY FROM ME AGAIN?
FOR NOW, YES...
I NO LONGER WISH TO SHOW YOU MY JUTSU SO YOU CAN JUST COPY IT.
ALTHOUGH... IT DOES SEEM LIKE YOU HAVEN'T MASTERED THAT EYE AS COMPLETELY AS A MEMBER OF THE UCHIHA CLAN COULD HAVE...
...
WELL THEN.
BOOF

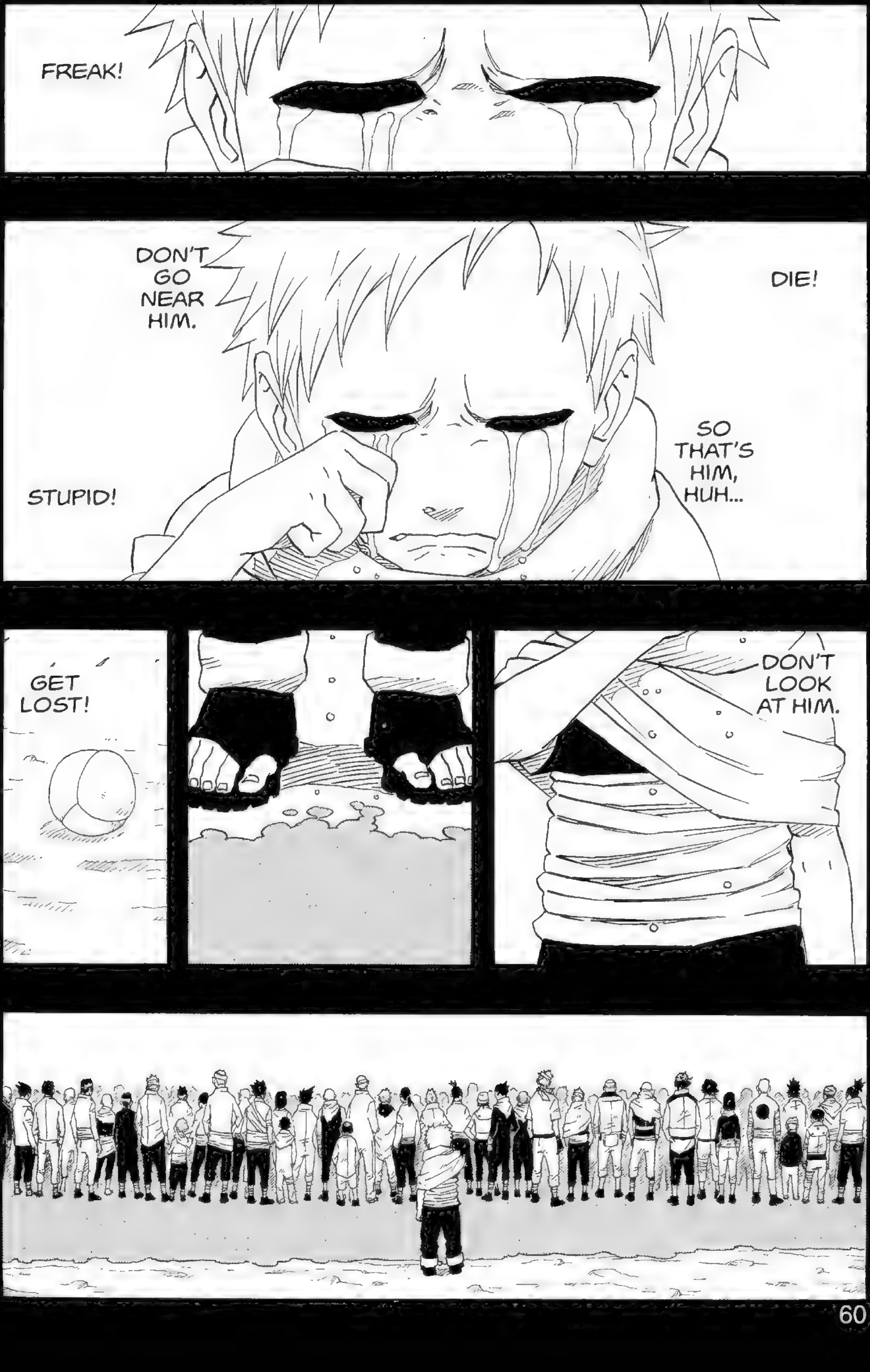

...
TEMARI ...
!
KANKURO!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
SKITTER SCATTER

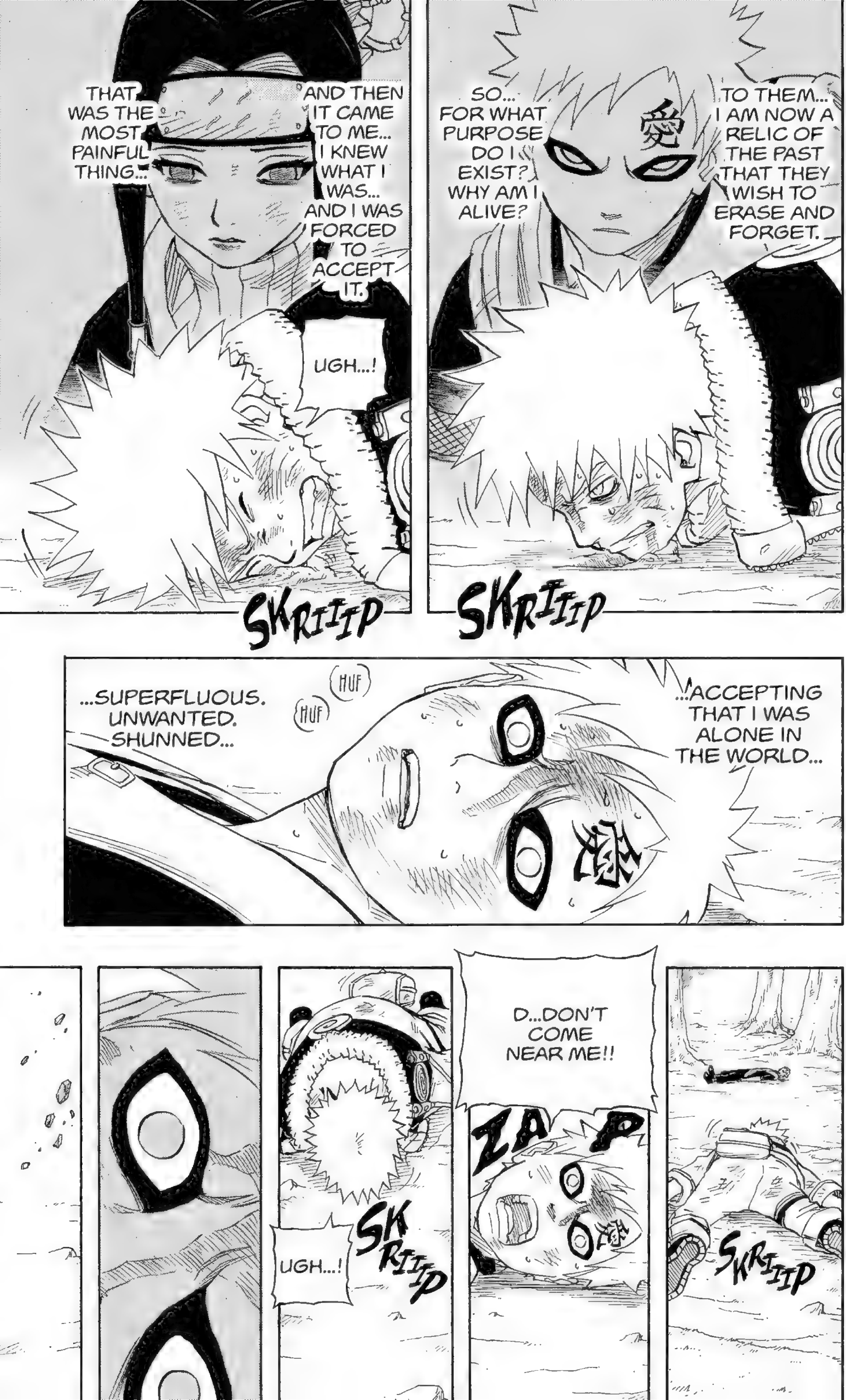

TOTTER
TAK
TAP
UGH...!
HUF
SHMP
HUF
TAKE CARE OF HER...
HUF
HUF
ZOOM
HEY!!

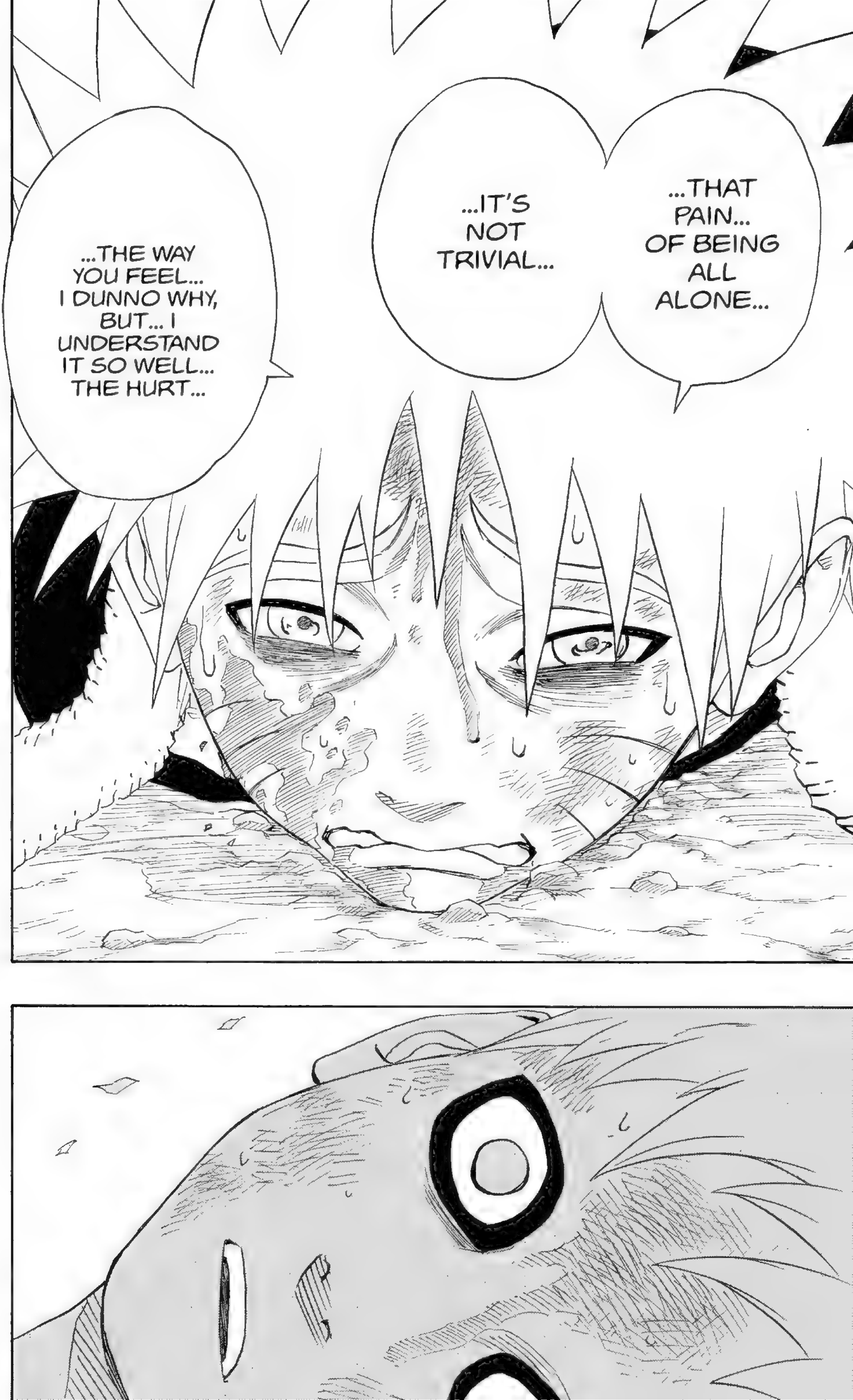

...WHY ... IS HE SO STRONG...?!
...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KREEE...
UGH...
HUF
GRRR
I WON'T!!
I REFUSE!!
...I WILL NOT CEASE TO EXIST...!

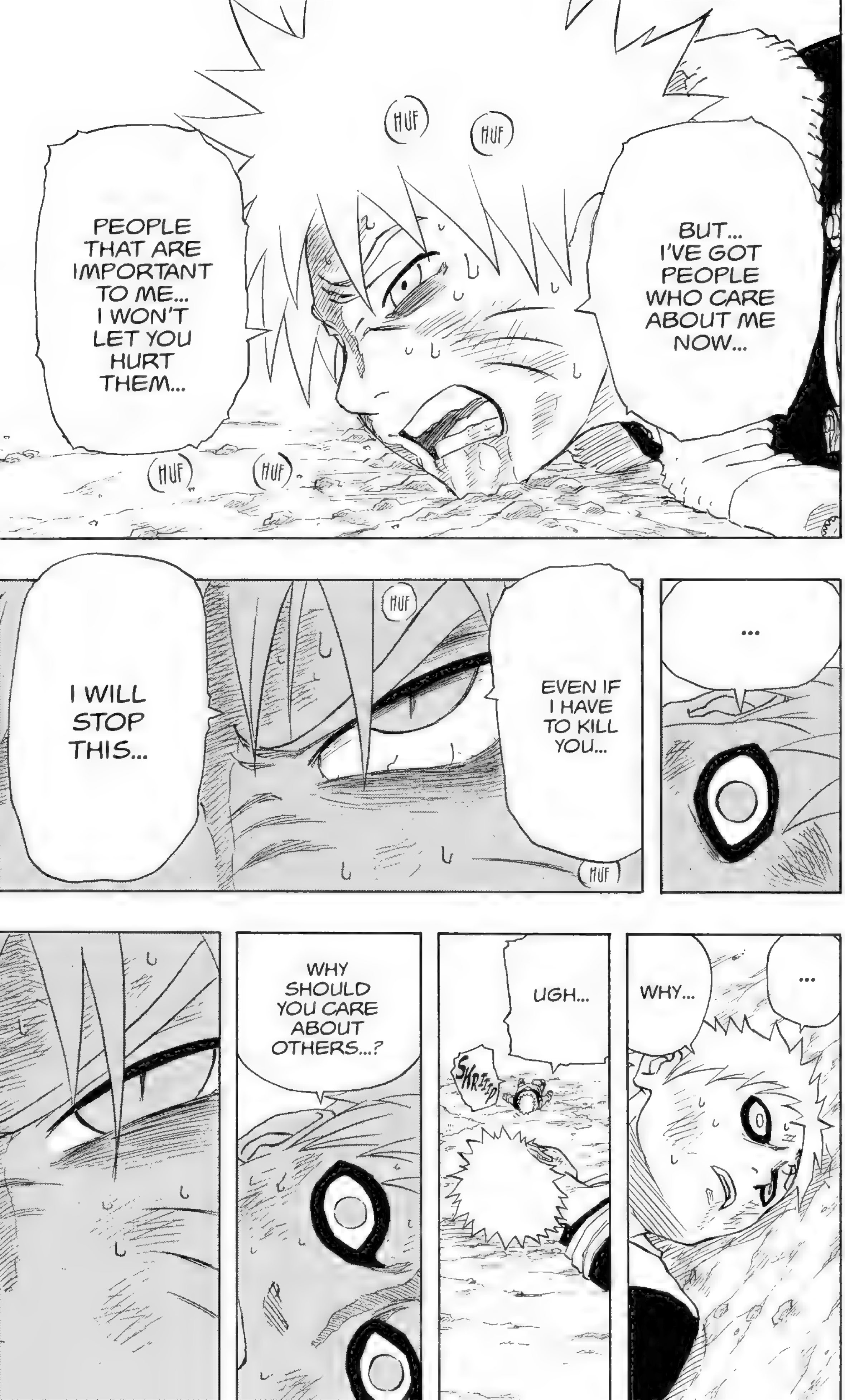
READ THIS WAY

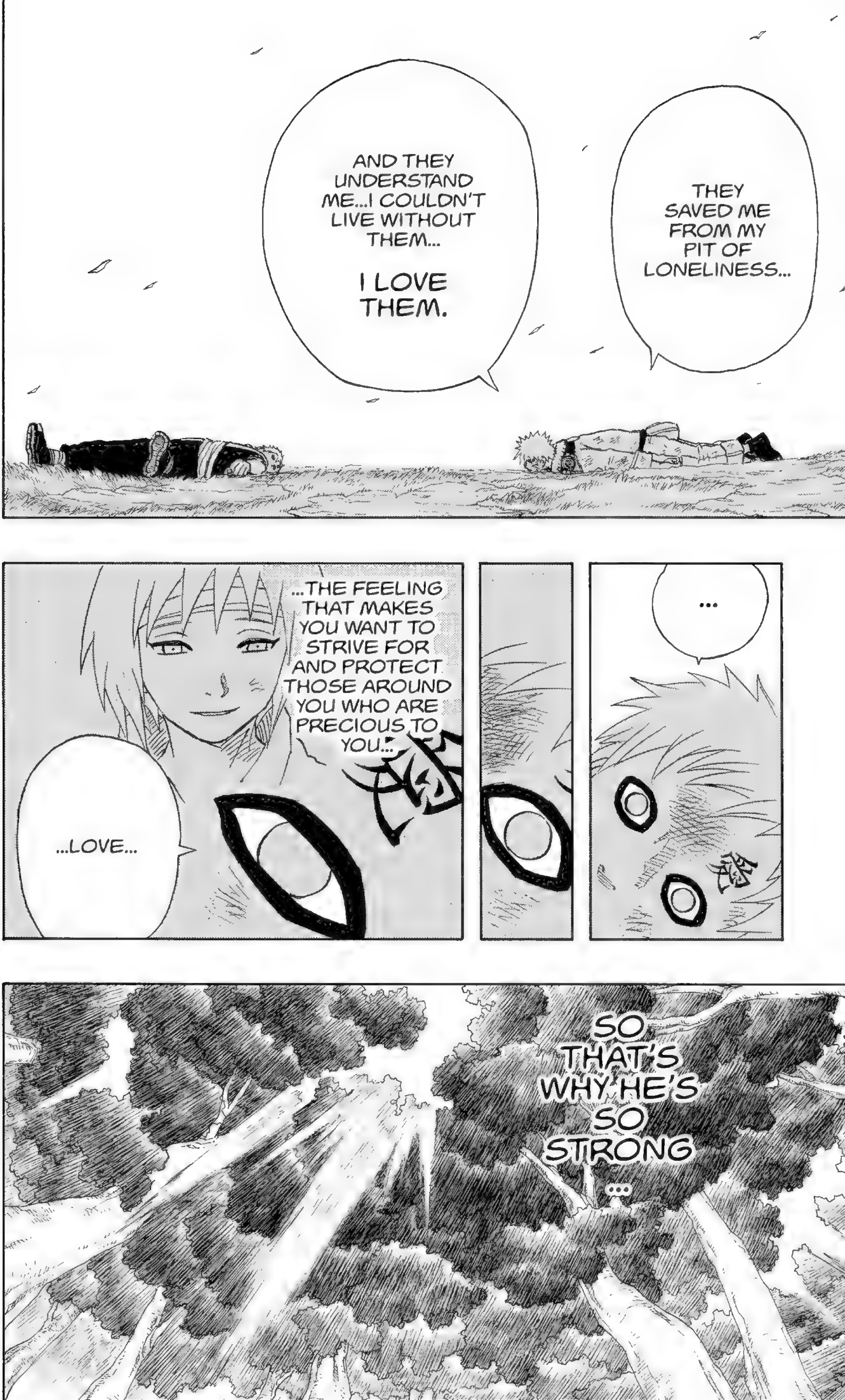

I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK TO HIM!
WHOA! SOMETHING SURE IS STINKY!
HEY! THERE HE IS!
SO THAT'S HIM, HUH...
HE DOESN'T HAVE A FAMILY!
GO AWAY!
FREAK!

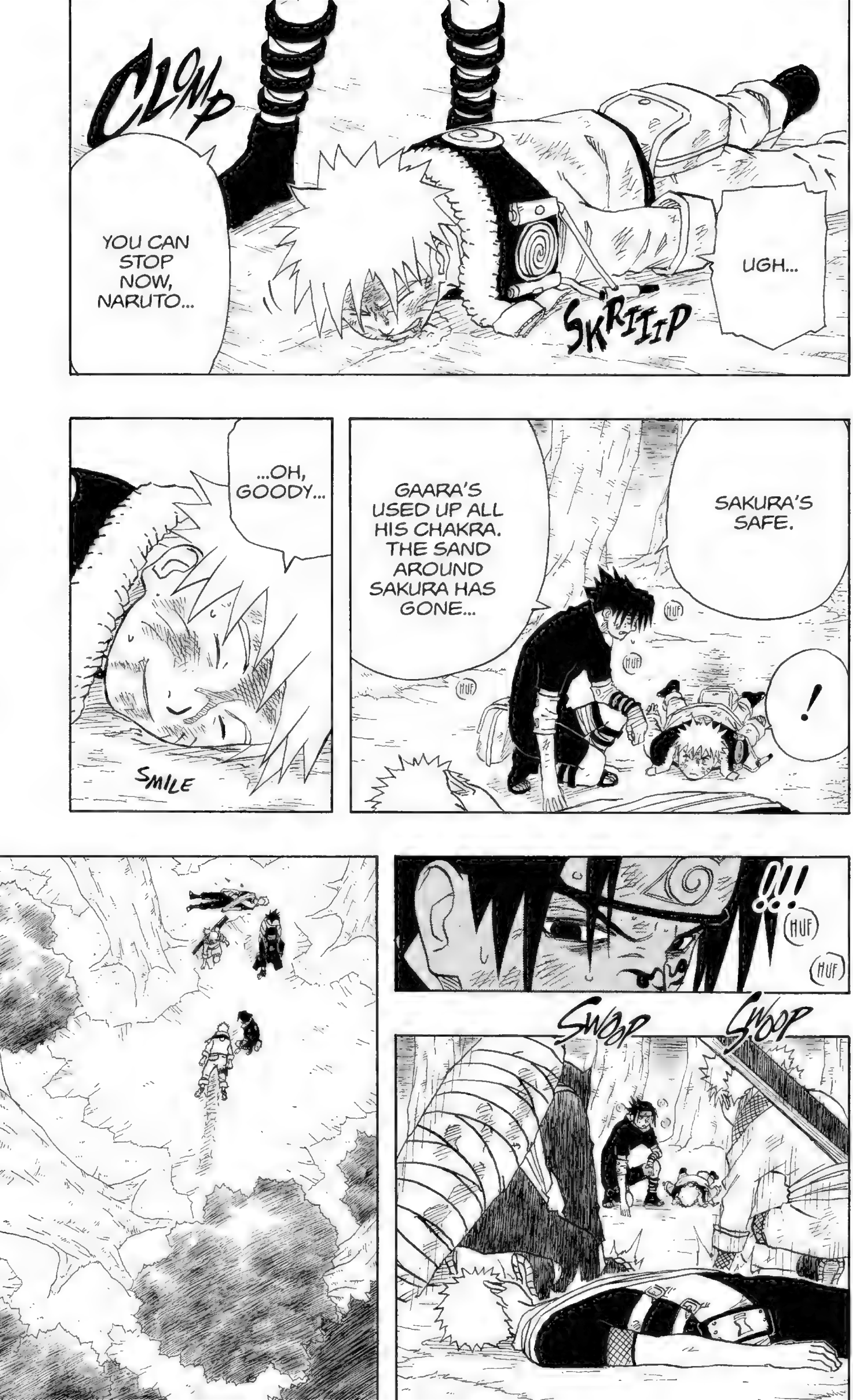

FREAK!
DIE!
DON'T GO NEAR HIM.
SO THAT'S HIM, HUH...
STUPID!
DON'T LOOK AT HIM.
GET LOST!

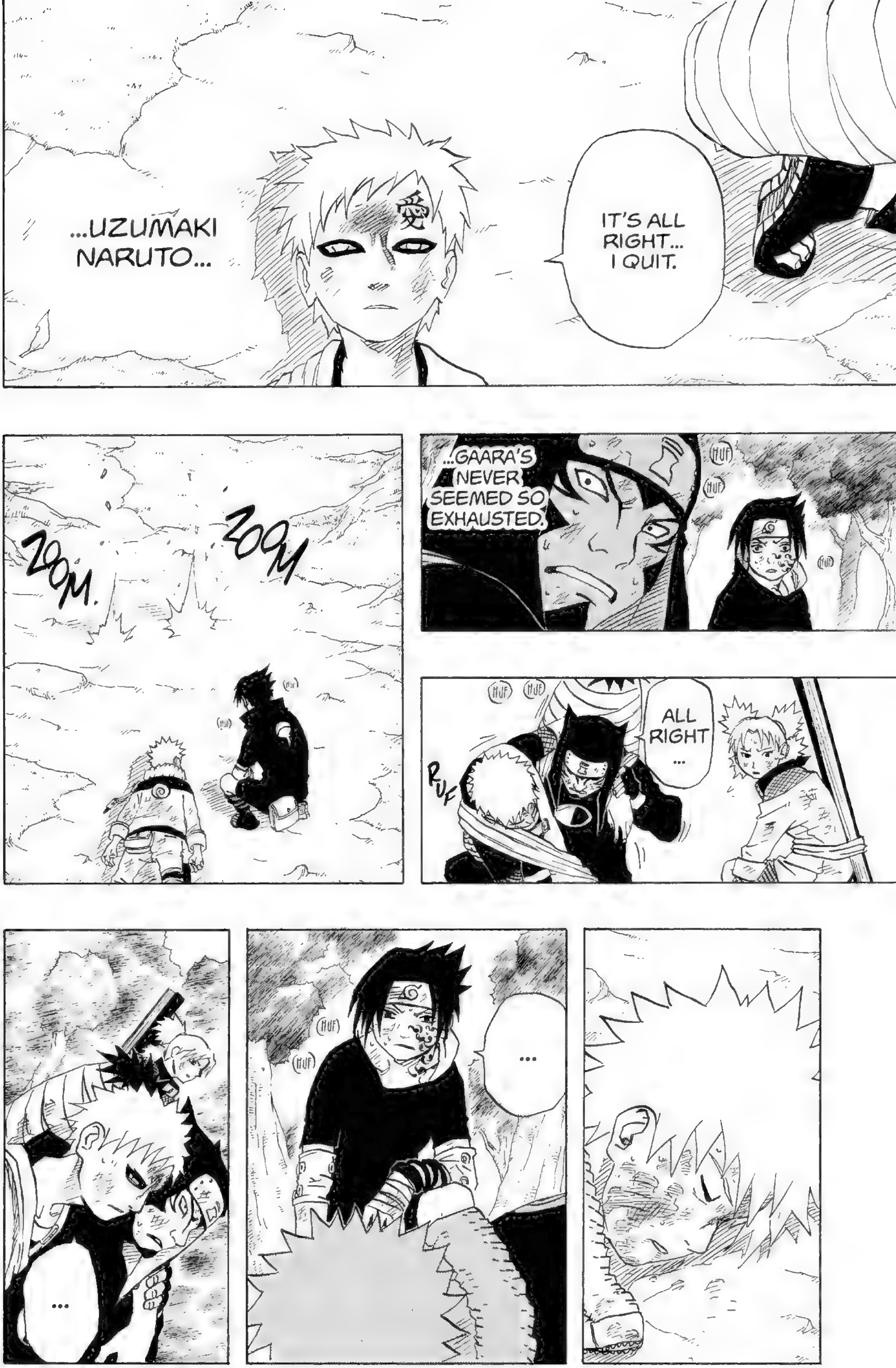

TO THEM... I AM NOW A RELIC OF THE PAST THAT THEY WISH TO ERASE AND FORGET.
SO... FOR WHAT PURPOSE DO I EXIST? WHY AM I ALIVE?
SKRIIIP
AND THEN IT CAME TO ME... I KNEW WHAT I WAS... AND I WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT IT.
THAT WAS THE MOST PAINFUL THING...
UGH...!
SKRIIIP
...ACCEPTING THAT I WAS ALONE IN THE WORLD...
HUF
HUF
...SUPERFLUOUS. UNWANTED. SHUNNED...
SKRIIIP
D...DON'T COME NEAR ME!!
ZAP
SKRIIIP
UGH...!

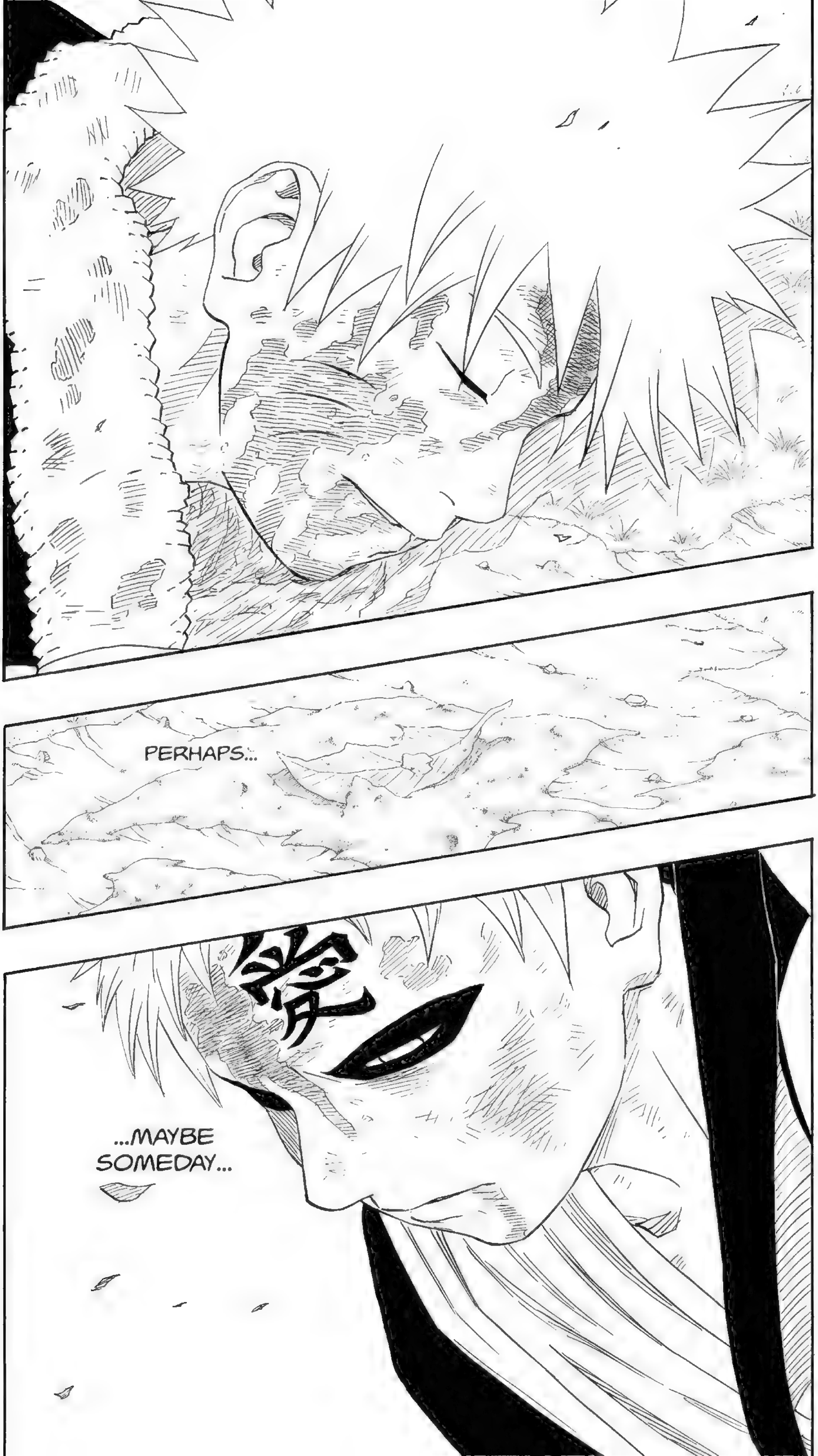

...THAT PAIN... OF BEING ALL ALONE...
...IT'S NOT TRIVIAL...
...THE WAY YOU FEEL... I DUNNO WHY, BUT... I UNDERSTAND IT SO WELL... THE HURT...

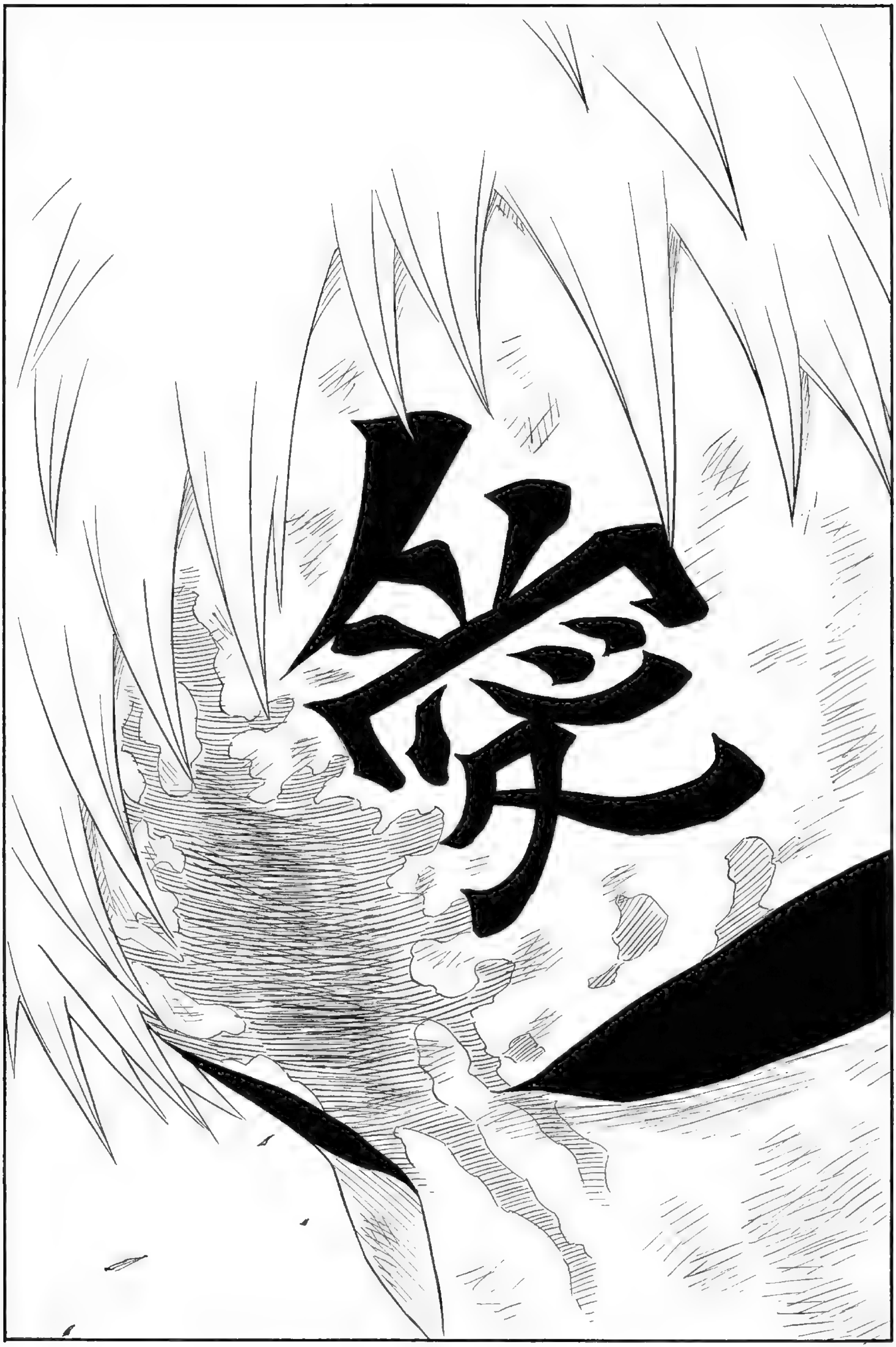

HUF
HUF
BUT... I'VE GOT PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT ME NOW...
PEOPLE THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME... I WON'T LET YOU HURT THEM...
HUF
HUF
...
HUF
EVEN IF I HAVE TO KILL YOU...
HUF
I WILL STOP THIS...
...
WHY...
UGH...
SHRIIID
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT OTHERS...?


THEY SAVED ME FROM MY PIT OF LONELINESS...
AND THEY UNDERSTAND ME...I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEM... I LOVE THEM.
...
...THE FEELING THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO STRIVE FOR AND PROTECT THOSE AROUND YOU WHO ARE PRECIOUS TO YOU...
...LOVE...
SO THAT'S WHY HE'S SO STRONG ...

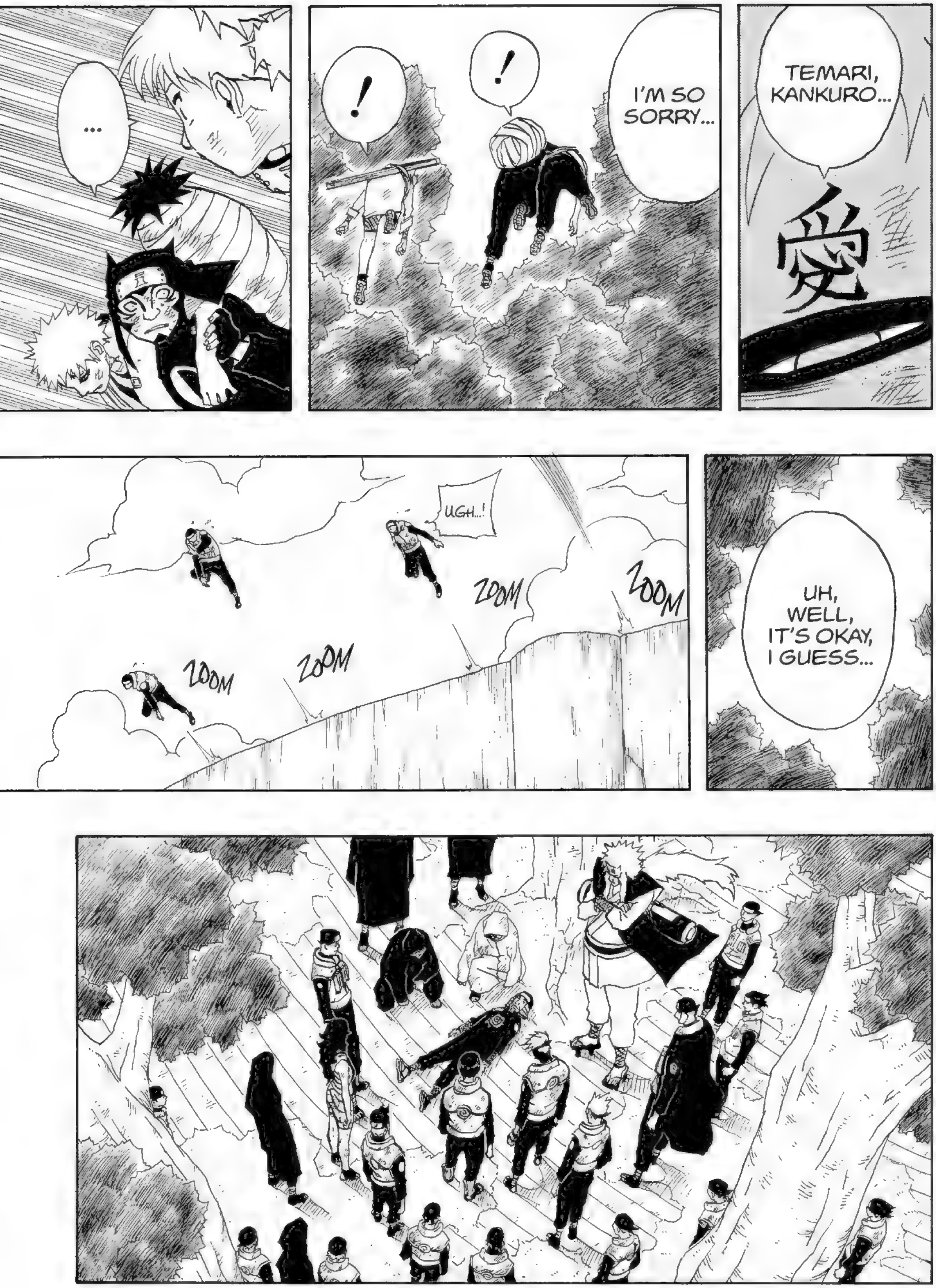

UGH...
SKRIIIP
CLOMP
YOU CAN STOP NOW, NARUTO...
SAKURA'S SAFE.
!
HUF
HUF
HUF
GAARA'S USED UP ALL HIS CHAKRA. THE SAND AROUND SAKURA HAS GONE...
...OH, GOODY...
SMILE
!!!
HUF
HUF
SWOOP
SWOOP


IT'S ALL RIGHT... I QUIT.
...UZUMAKI NARUTO...
(HUF)
(HUF)
(HUF)
...GAARA'S NEVER SEEMED SO EXHAUSTED.
(HUF)
(HUF)
ALL RIGHT ...
RUF
ZOOM
ZOOM.
(HUF)
(HUF)
...
(HUF)
(HUF)
...


PERHAPS...
...MAYBE SOMEDAY...


愛

READ THIS WAY


TEMARI, KANKURO...
愛
I'M SO SORRY...
!
!
...
UH, WELL, IT'S OKAY, I GUESS...
UGH...!
ZOOM
ZOOM
ZOOM
ZOOM

## THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
## MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 24 CHAPTER 1

I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO FINISH DRAWING THE 31 PAGES OF THE STAND-ALONE "KARAKURI", AND THE DAY I HAD TO MAIL IT IN TO *JUMP* FINALLY ARRIVED. IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, IT WAS RIGHT AT THE END OF FEBRUARY, AND MY EXAMINER WAS ARAKI HIROHIKO* SENSEI.

I WENT TO THE POST OFFICE, NERVOUSLY HANDED OVER MY MANUSCRIPT, AND PUT MY HANDS TOGETHER SAYING "PLEASE LET ME WIN!" I WAS PRAYING TO THE GODS ONLY WHEN CONVENIENT, AS USUAL. BUT ALWAYS WITH UTMOST SINCERITY, OF COURSE! I WOULD CLOSE MY EYES AND WISH FERVENTLY FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART. I PROBABLY REPEATED MY WORDS, OFFERING THEM TO THE HEAVENS, 20 TIMES. I WAS PRAYING SO EARNESTLY THAT I DIDN'T NOTICE AT FIRST, BUT WHEN I CAME TO, THE POSTAL WORKER WAS FROZEN IN PLACE, ENVELOPE IN HAND, WITH AN INCREDIBLY COLD LOOK IN HIS EYES.

NOT THAT I BLAME HIM, FOR IF SOMEONE HANDS YOU AN ENVELOPE AND IMMEDIATELY FALLS INTO FERVENT WORSHIP, ANYONE WOULD THINK "THIS FELLOW'S WEIRD...". FURTHERMORE, I HAD STARTED MUTTERING UNDER MY BREATH, LOOKING ALL SERIOUS. SO FORGET WEIRD, HE PROBABLY THOUGHT I WAS SCARY! BUT I DIDN'T CARE!! I WANTED TO WIN THE AWARD SO BAD, I COULDN'T HELP IT!!

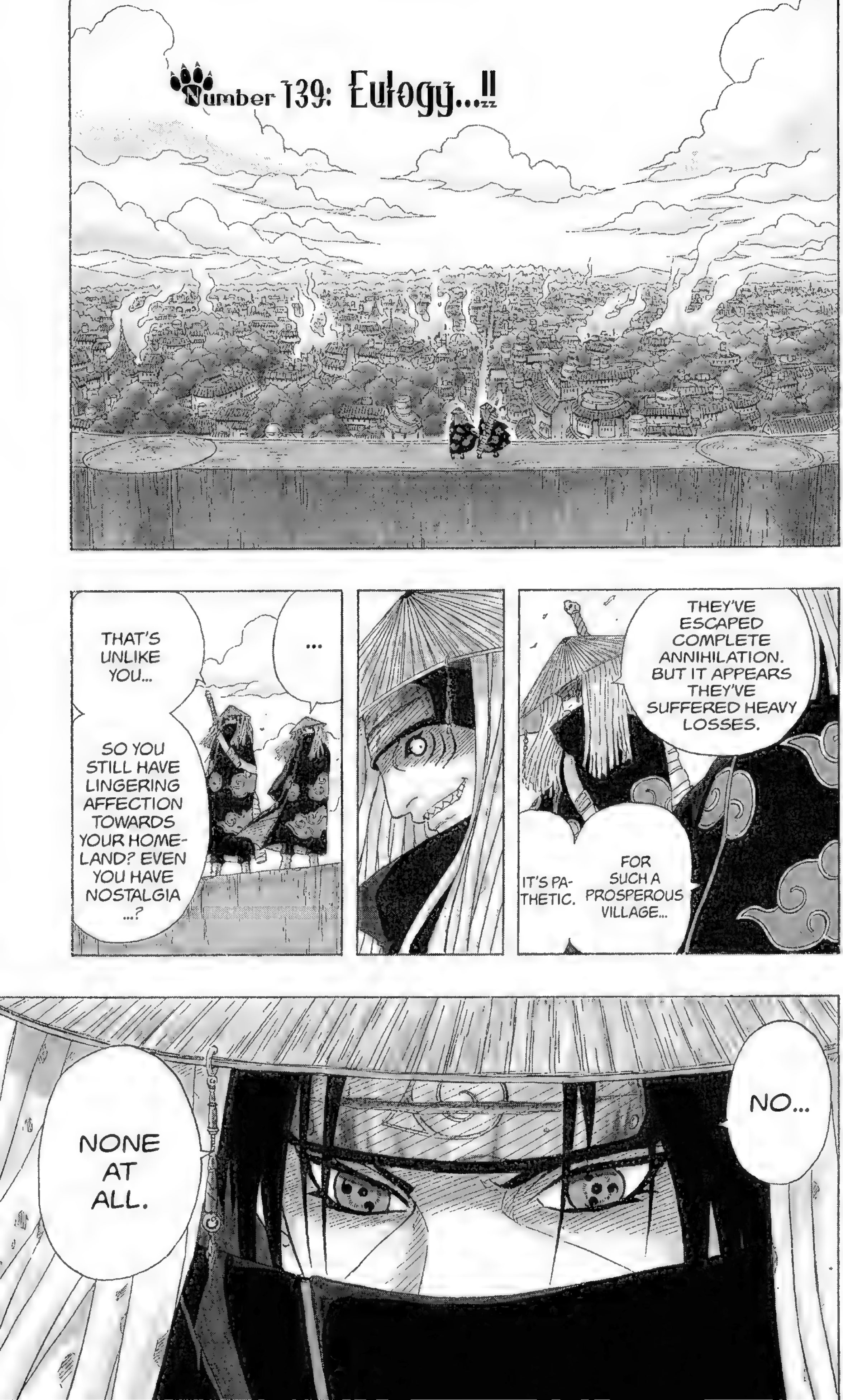
AFTERWARDS, I HAD TO GO HOME AND WAIT THE LONG TWO MONTHS UNTIL THE WINNERS WERE ANNOUNCED. ...EVEN DURING FUN CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS, OR IN THE MIDDLE OF CLASS, I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. IT WOULD KEEP ME UP AT NIGHT IF I THOUGHT ABOUT IT RIGHT BEFORE BEDTIME. I WOULD SECRETLY PEEK BACK AT THE COPY OF MY MANUSCRIPT AND BE LIKE, "SHOOT! THIS WILL NEVER WIN!" OR, "HMM~! BUT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, IT WILL PASS..." ...I BECAME MENTALLY FATIGUED. AND SIX DAYS BEFORE THE RESULTS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ANNOUNCED, ONE OF MY FRIENDS TOLD ME SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS!

THAT FRIEND WAS A HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND OF USUTA KYOSUKE* SENSEI. AND THIS IS WHAT HE TOLD ME.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

[NOTE: ARAKI HIROHIKO IS THE ARTIST OF *JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE*. USUTA KYOSUKE IS THE ARTIST OF *SEXY COMMANDO GAIDEN*.]

## Number 139: Eulogy...!!


THAT'S UNLIKE YOU...
...
SO YOU STILL HAVE LINGERING AFFECTION TOWARDS YOUR HOMELAND? EVEN YOU HAVE NOSTALGIA ...?
THEY'VE ESCAPED COMPLETE ANNIHILATION. BUT IT APPEARS THEY'VE SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES.
FOR SUCH A PROSPEROUS VILLAGE...
IT'S PATHETIC.
NO...
NONE AT ALL.

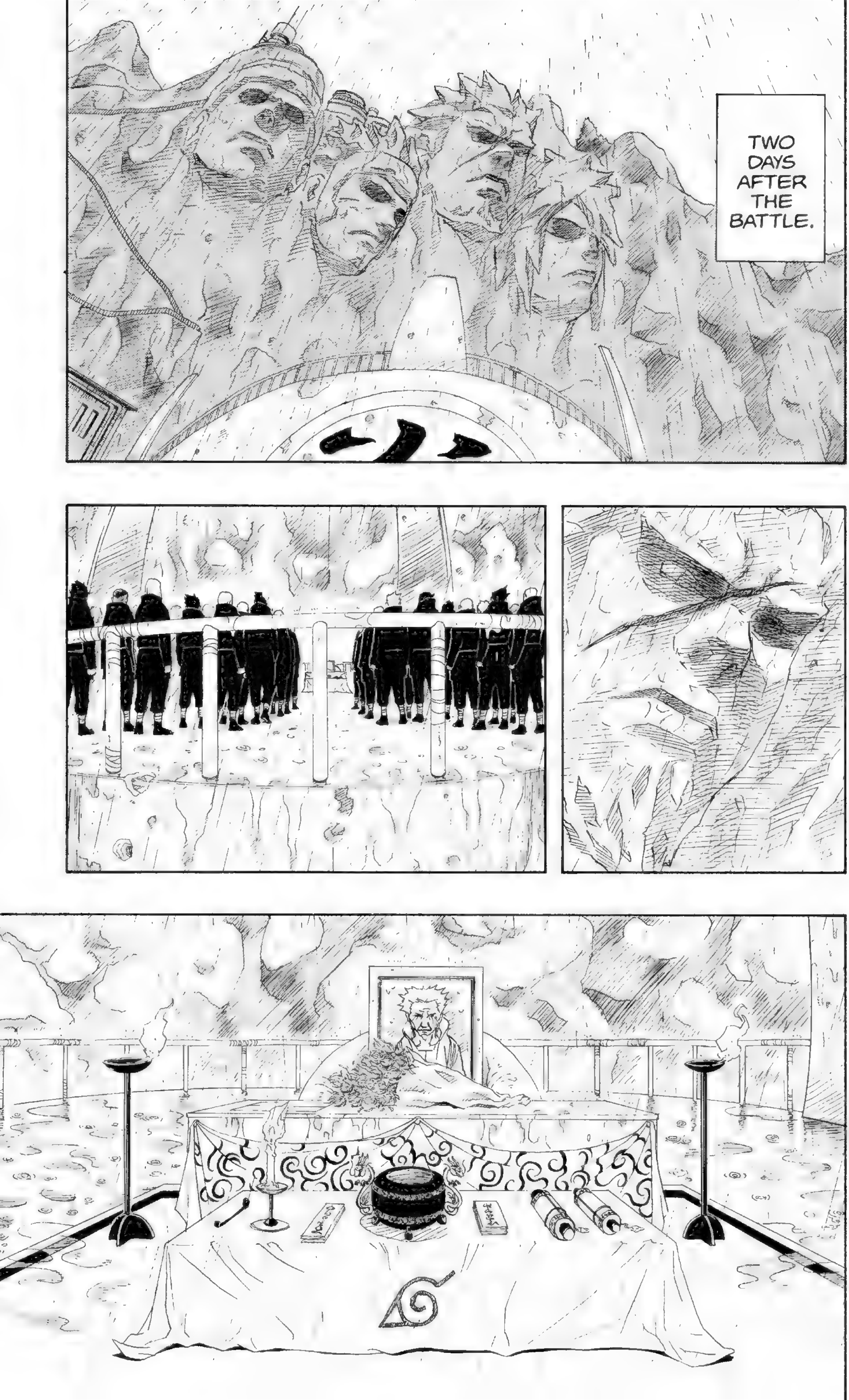
## Number 139:

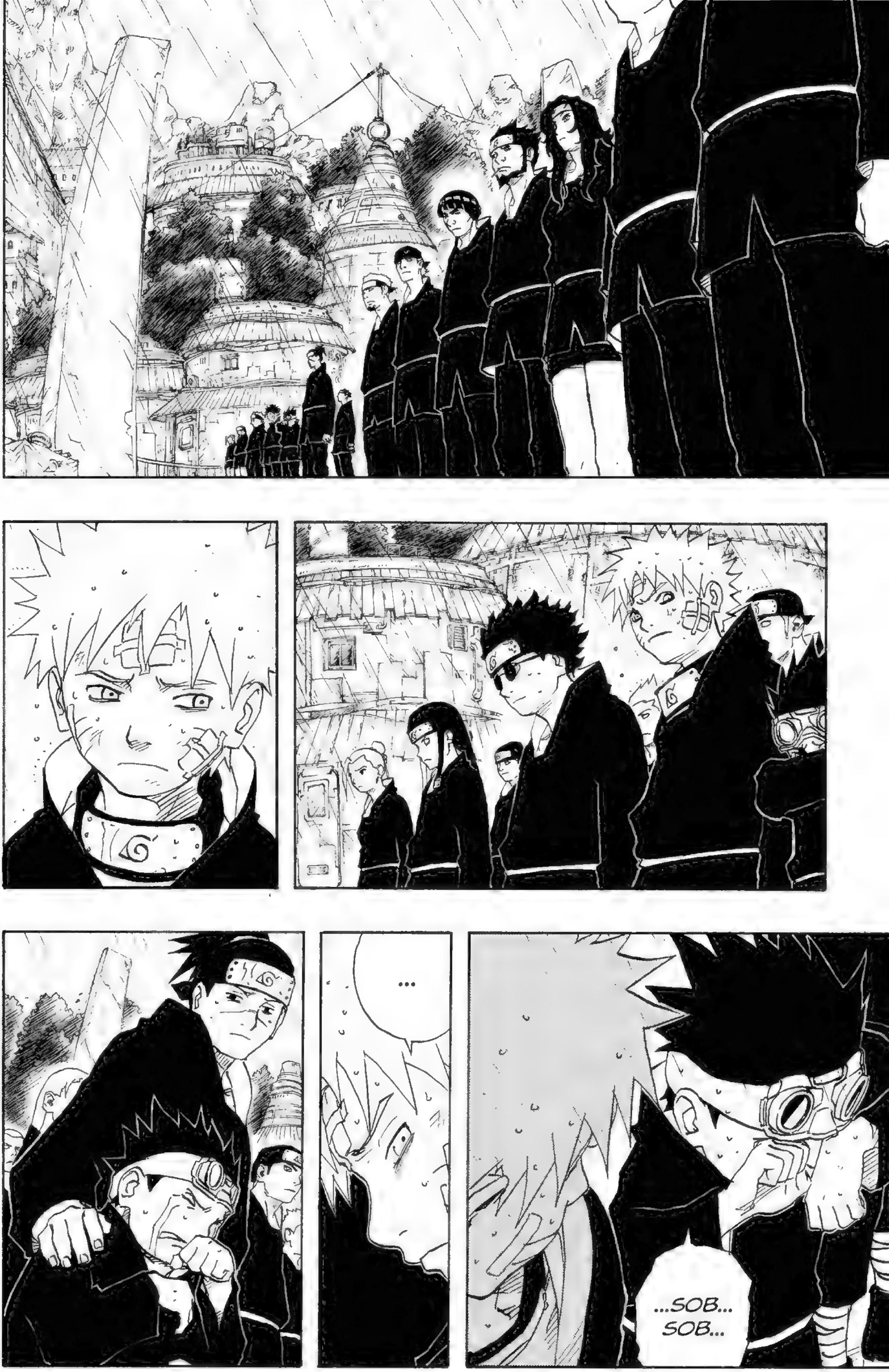
# Eulogy...!!

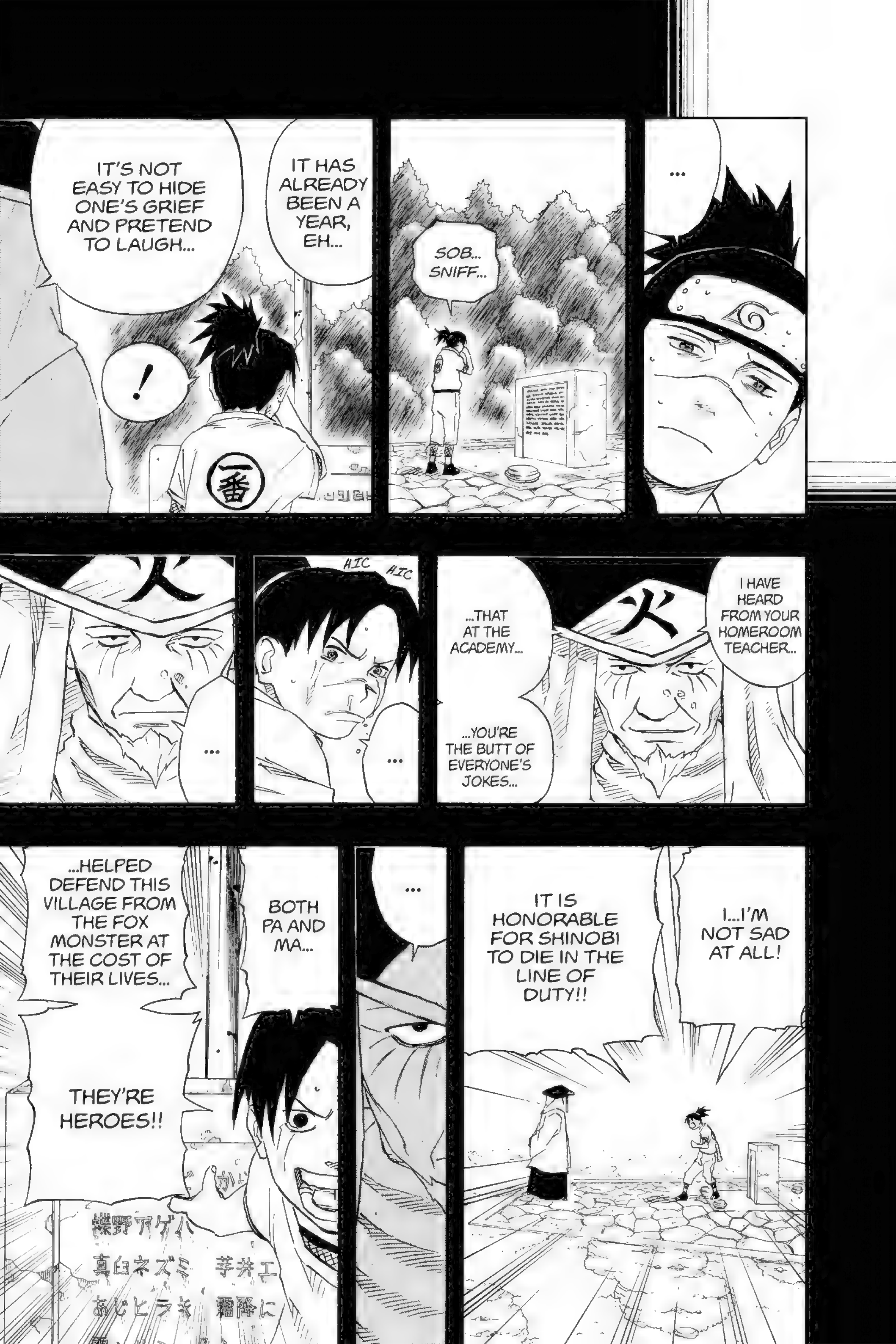
NARUTO

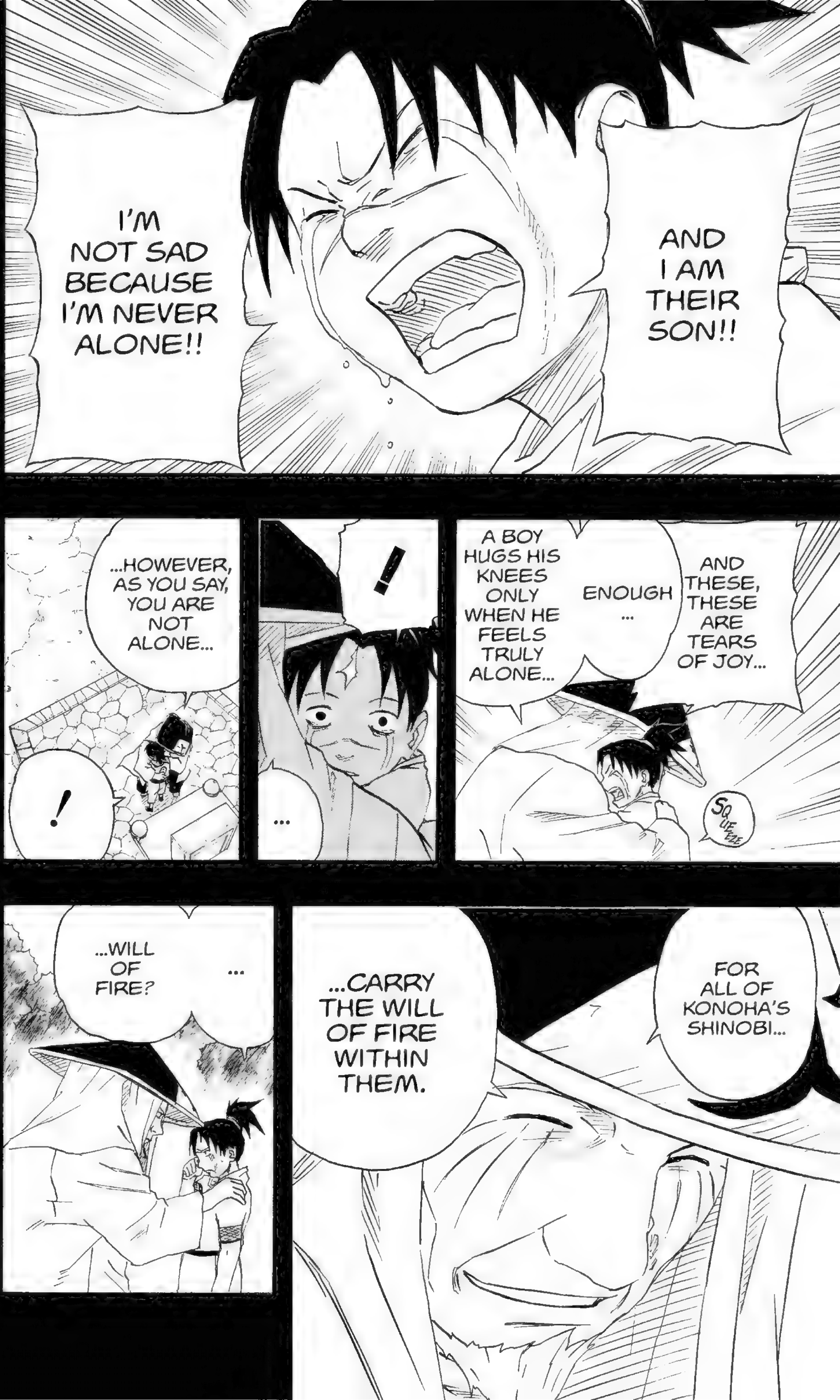
-ナルト-

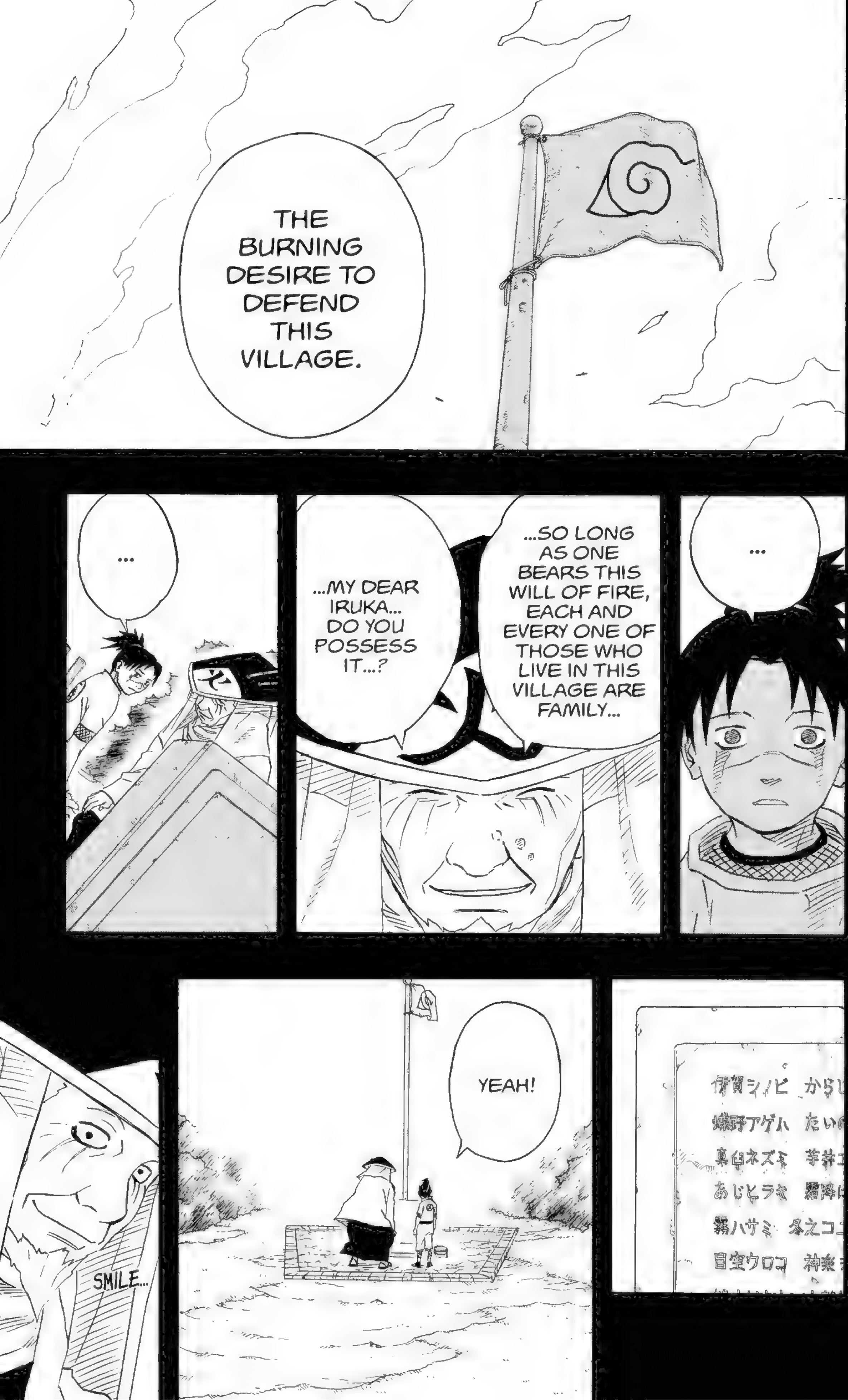
SSSLURP
GRIN GRIN

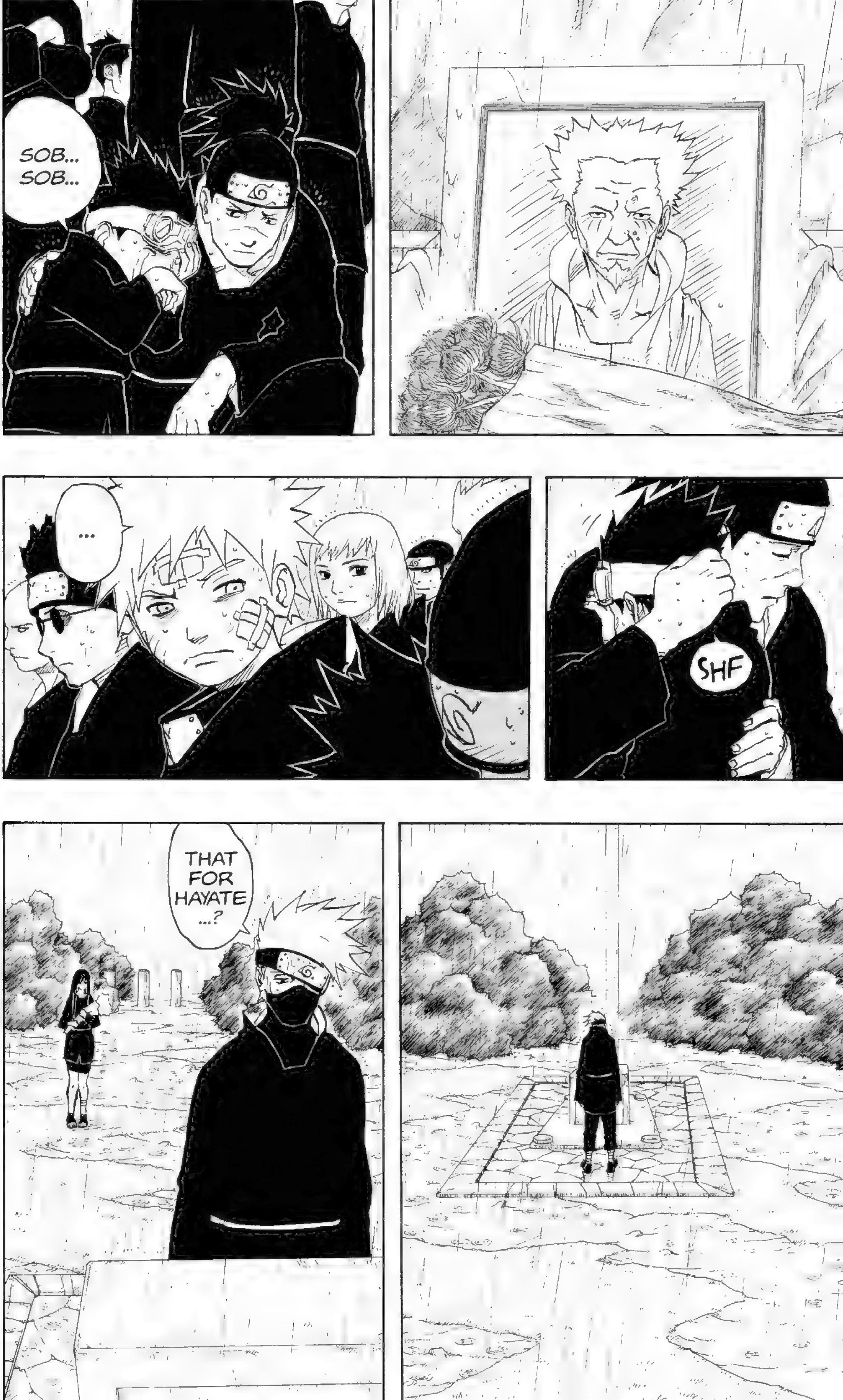

TWO DAYS AFTER THE BATTLE.

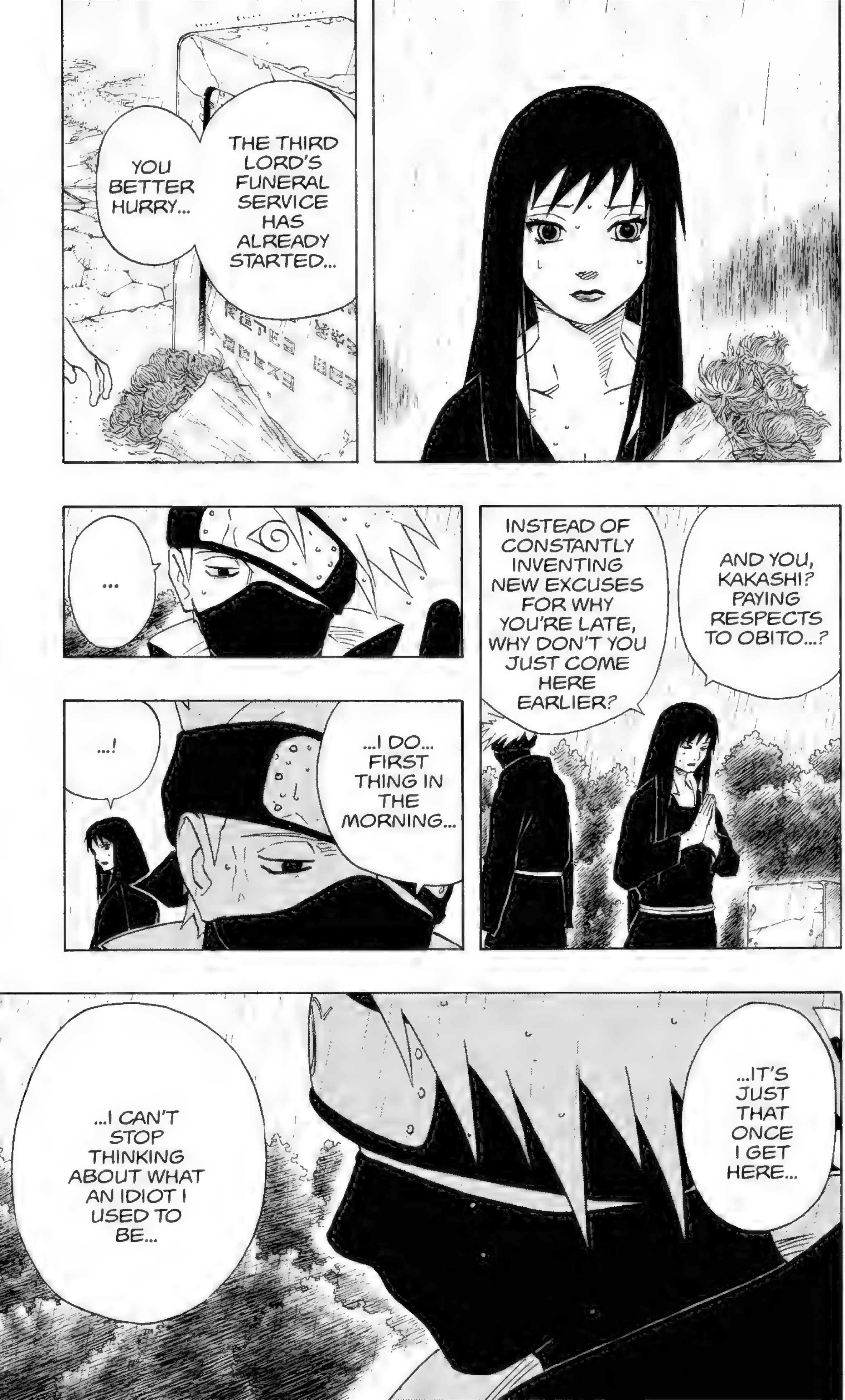

...
...SOB...
SOB...

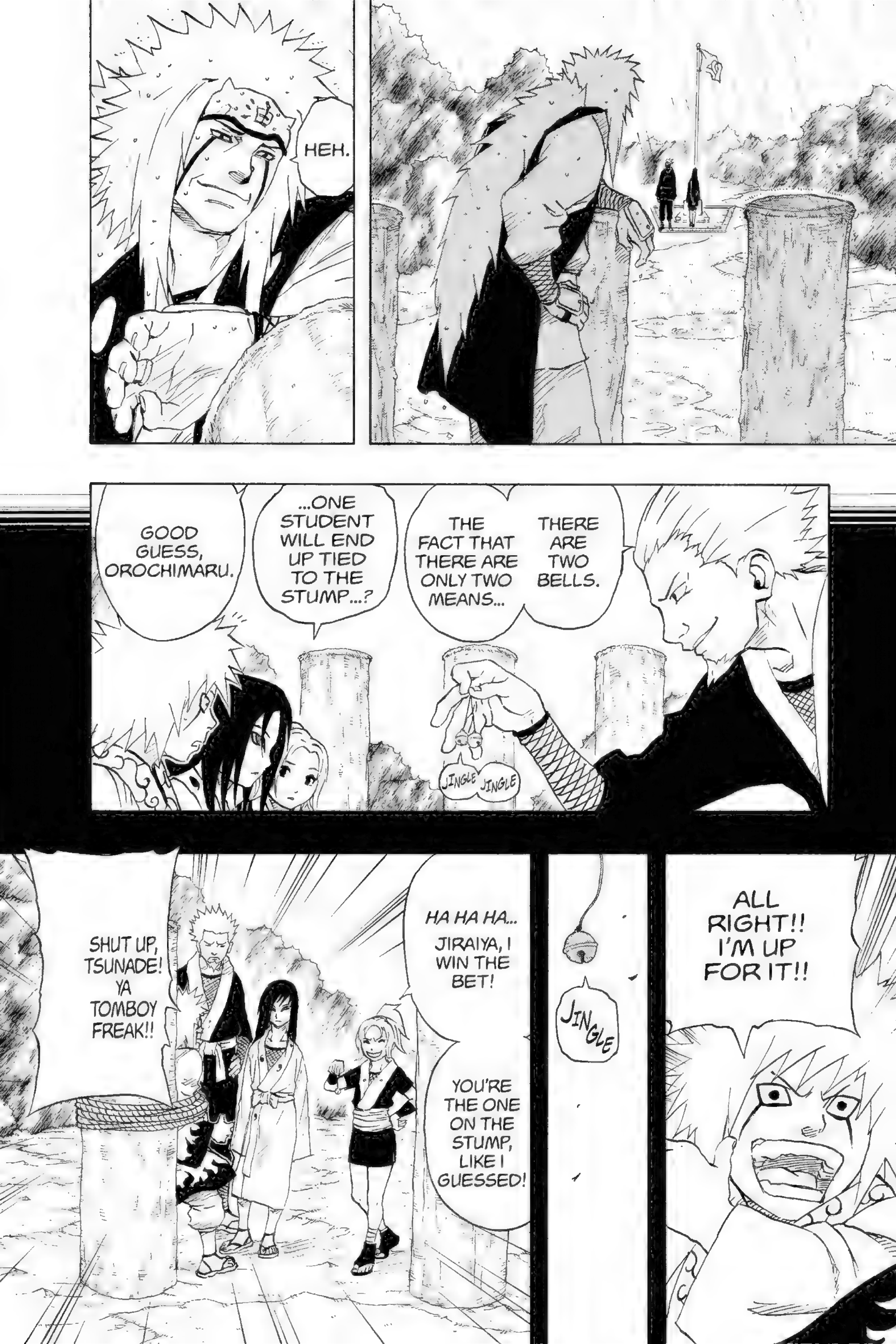

...
SOB... SNIFF...
IT HAS ALREADY BEEN A YEAR, EH...
IT'S NOT EASY TO HIDE ONE'S GRIEF AND PRETEND TO LAUGH...
!
I HAVE HEARD FROM YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER...
...THAT AT THE ACADEMY...
...YOU'RE THE BUTT OF EVERYONE'S JOKES...
HIC HIC
...
...
I...I'M NOT SAD AT ALL!
IT IS HONORABLE FOR SHINOBI TO DIE IN THE LINE OF DUTY!!
...
BOTH PA AND MA...
...HELPED DEFEND THIS VILLAGE FROM THE FOX MONSTER AT THE COST OF THEIR LIVES...
THEY'RE HEROES!!
蝶野アゲハ
真白ネズミ 芋井エ
あじヒラキ 霜降に

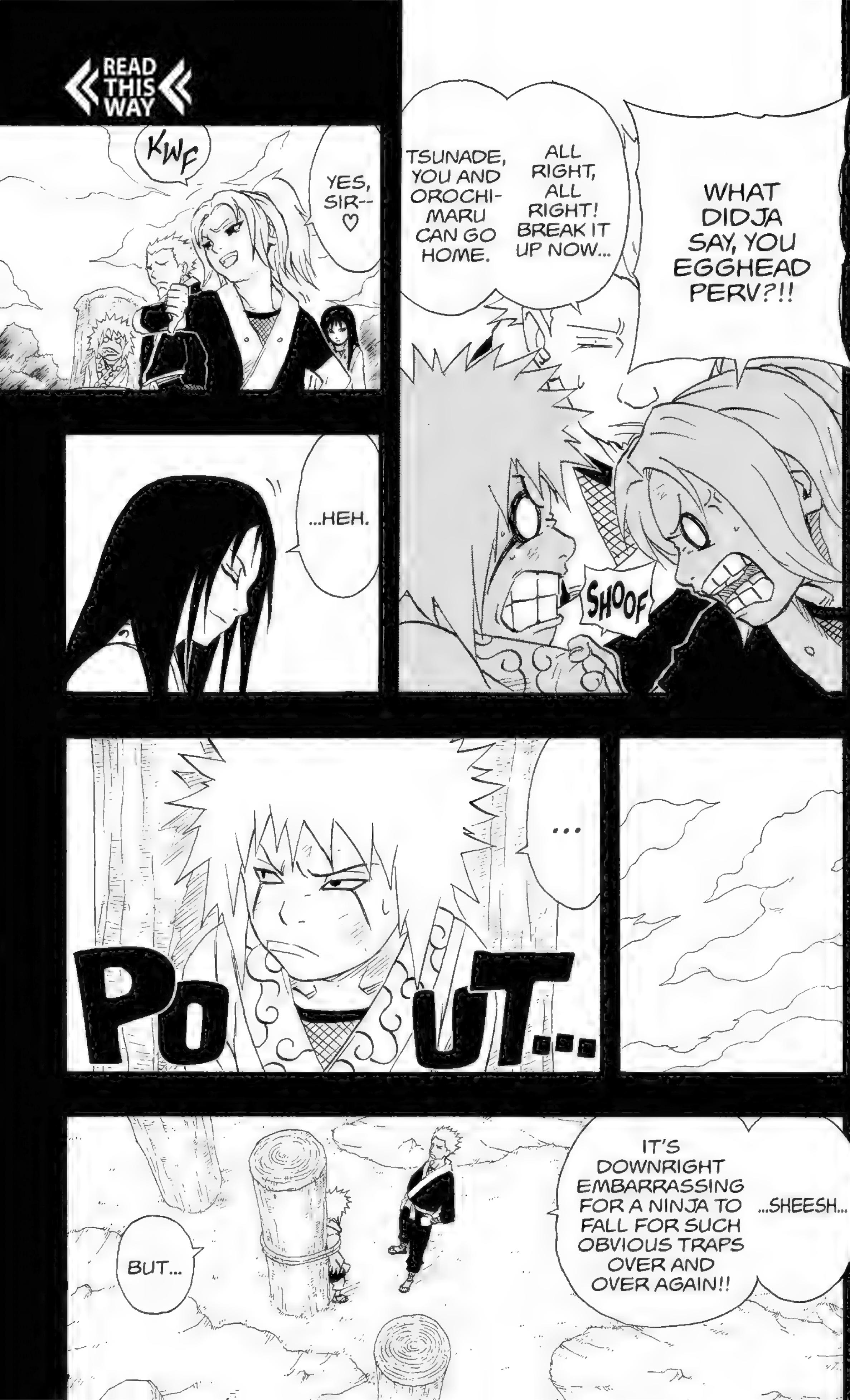

AND I AM THEIR SON!!
I'M NOT SAD BECAUSE I'M NEVER ALONE!!
AND THESE, THESE ARE TEARS OF JOY...
ENOUGH...
A BOY HUGS HIS KNEES ONLY WHEN HE FEELS TRULY ALONE...
SQUEEZE
!
...
...HOWEVER, AS YOU SAY, YOU ARE NOT ALONE...
!
FOR ALL OF KONOHA'S SHINOBI...
...CARRY THE WILL OF FIRE WITHIN THEM.
...
...WILL OF FIRE?

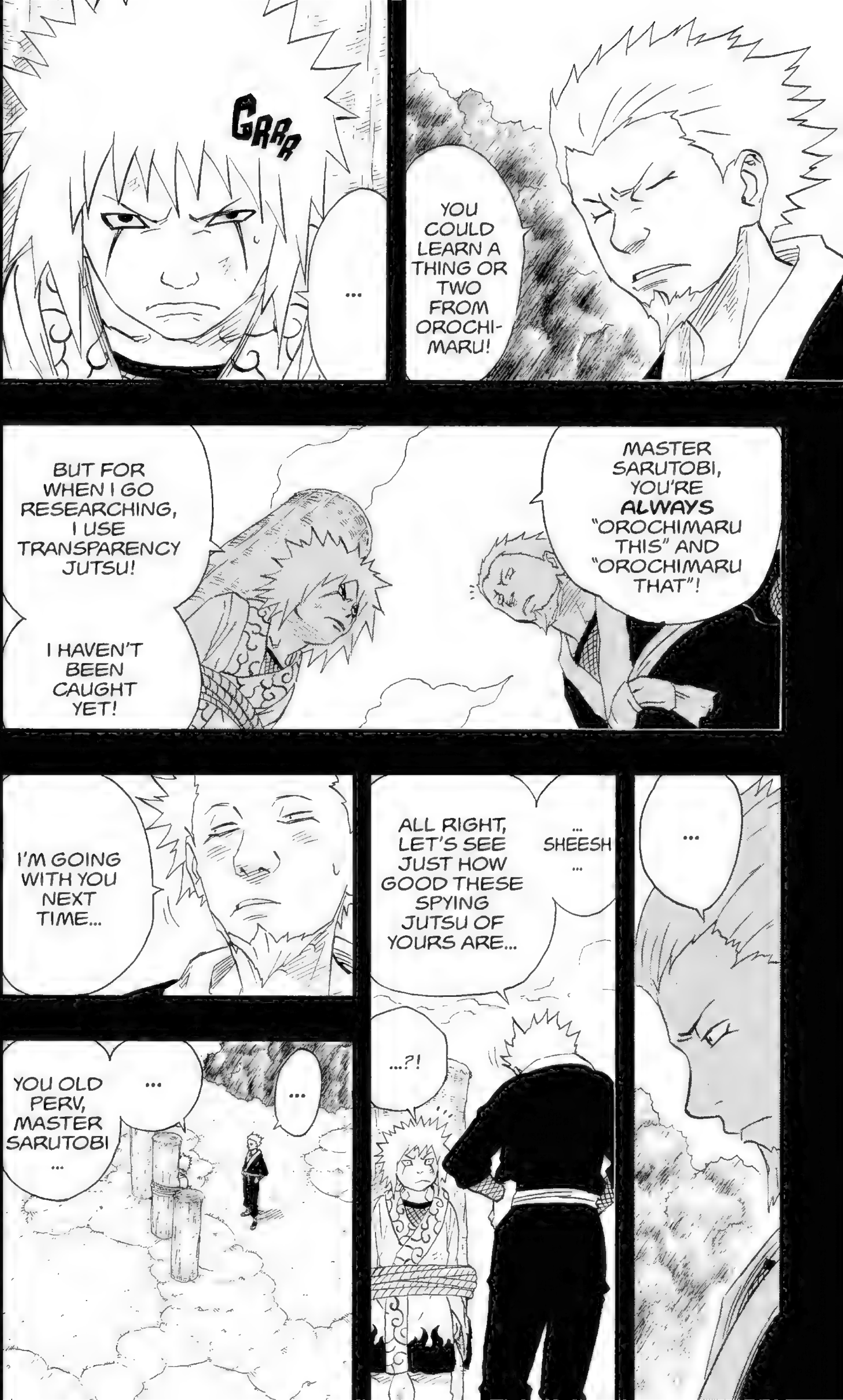

THE BURNING DESIRE TO DEFEND THIS VILLAGE.
...
...SO LONG AS ONE BEARS THIS WILL OF FIRE, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE WHO LIVE IN THIS VILLAGE ARE FAMILY...
...MY DEAR IRUKA... DO YOU POSSESS IT...?
...
伊賀シノビ
蝶野アゲハ
真白ネズミ
あじヒラキ
霧ハサミ
目空ウロコ
YEAH!
SMILE...

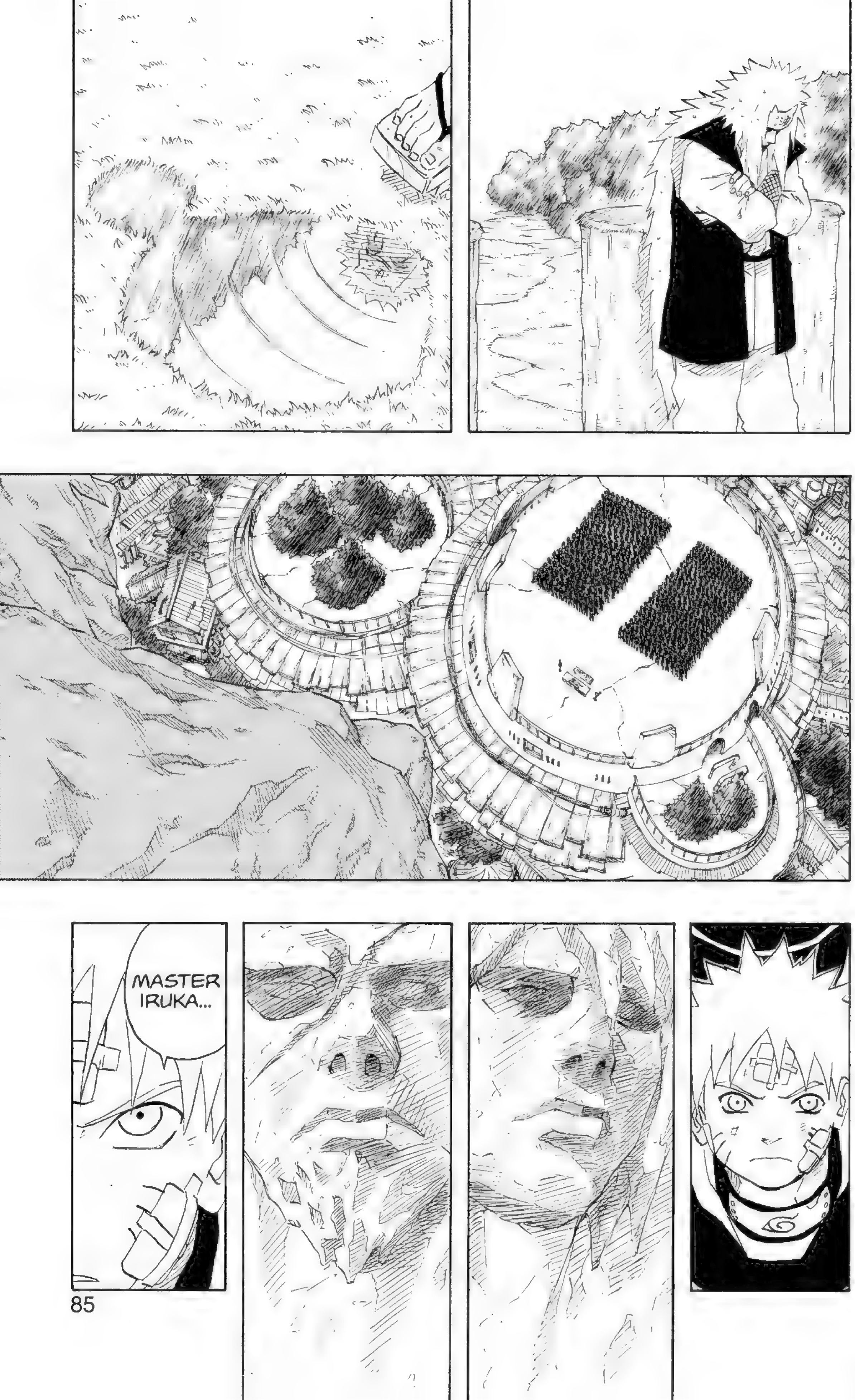

SOB... SOB...
SHF
...
THAT FOR HAYATE ...?

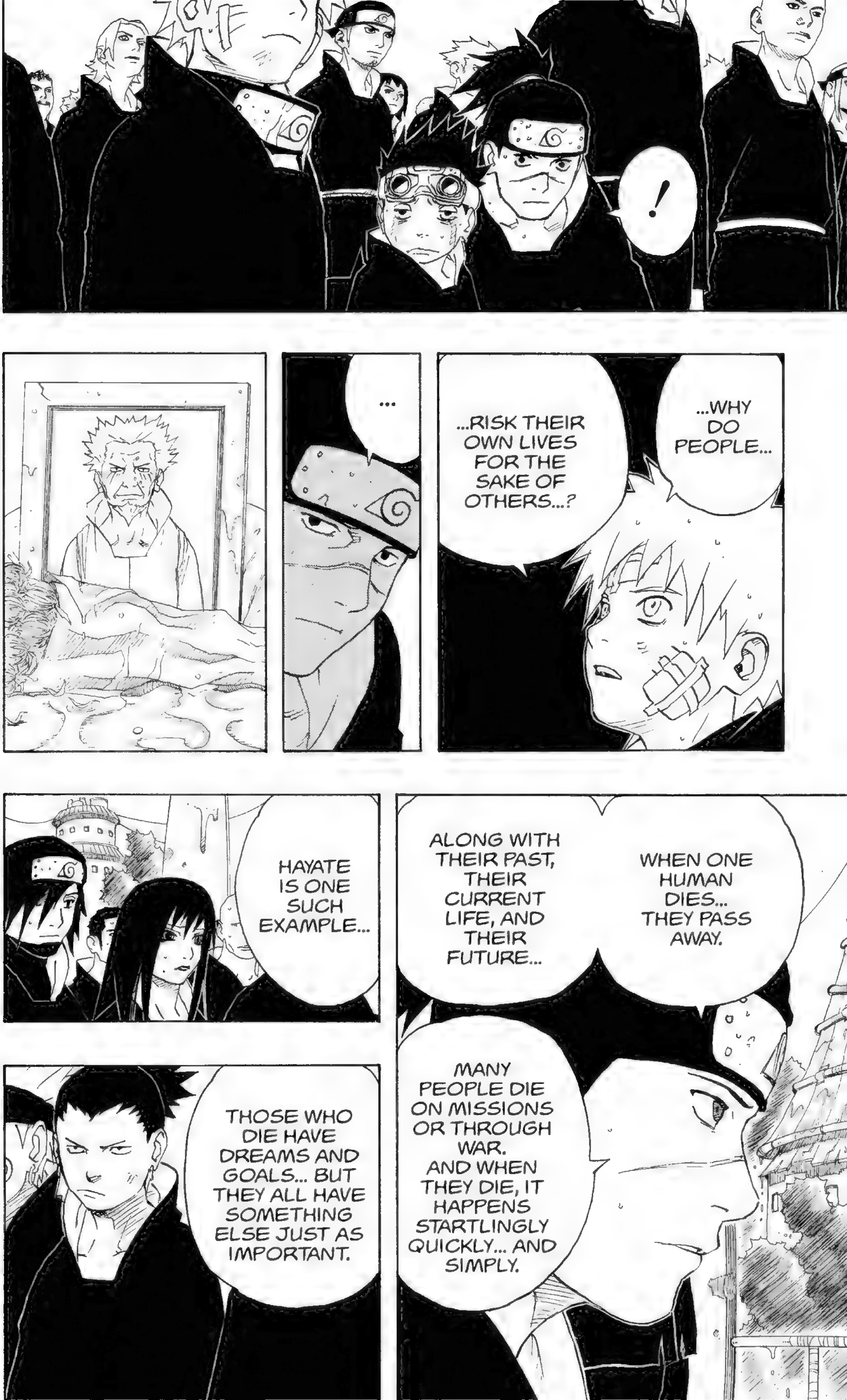

THE THIRD LORD'S FUNERAL SERVICE HAS ALREADY STARTED...
YOU BETTER HURRY...
AND YOU, KAKASHI? PAYING RESPECTS TO OBITO...?
INSTEAD OF CONSTANTLY INVENTING NEW EXCUSES FOR WHY YOU'RE LATE, WHY DON'T YOU JUST COME HERE EARLIER?
...
...I DO... FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...
...!
...IT'S JUST THAT ONCE I GET HERE...
...I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT AN IDIOT I USED TO BE...


HEH.
THERE ARE TWO BELLS.
THE FACT THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO MEANS...
...ONE STUDENT WILL END UP TIED TO THE STUMP...?
GOOD GUESS, OROCHIMARU.
JINGLE JINGLE
ALL RIGHT!! I'M UP FOR IT!!
JINGLE
HA HA HA... JIRAIYA, I WIN THE BET!
YOU'RE THE ONE ON THE STUMP, LIKE I GUESSED!
SHUT UP, TSUNADE! YA TOMBOY FREAK!!

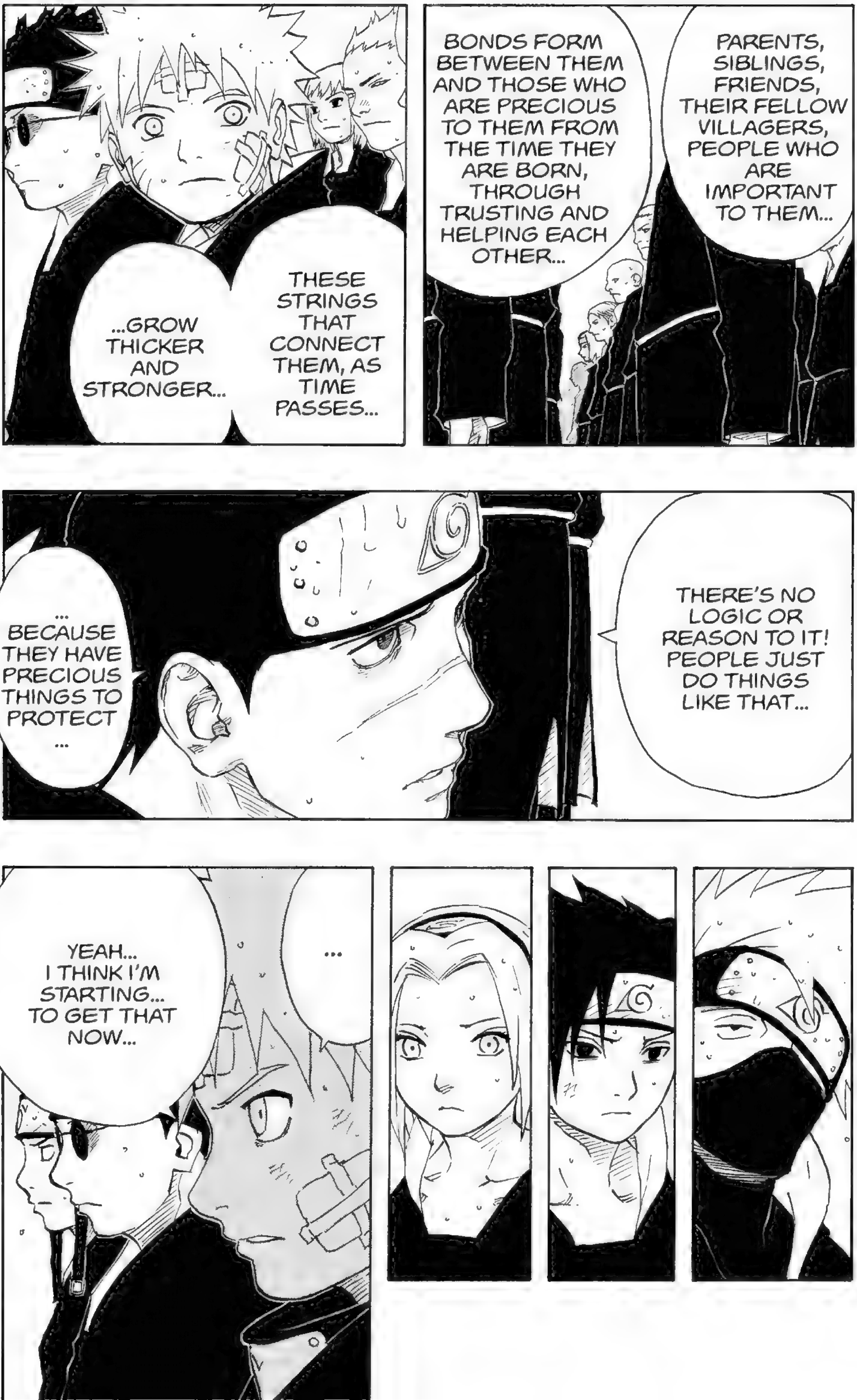

READ THIS WAY
WHAT DIDJA SAY, YOU EGGHEAD PERV?!!
SHOOF
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! BREAK IT UP NOW...
TSUNADE, YOU AND OROCHIMARU CAN GO HOME.
YES, SIR--♡
KWF
...HEH.
...
POUT...
...SHEESH...
IT'S DOWNRIGHT EMBARRASSING FOR A NINJA TO FALL FOR SUCH OBVIOUS TRAPS OVER AND OVER AGAIN!!
BUT...

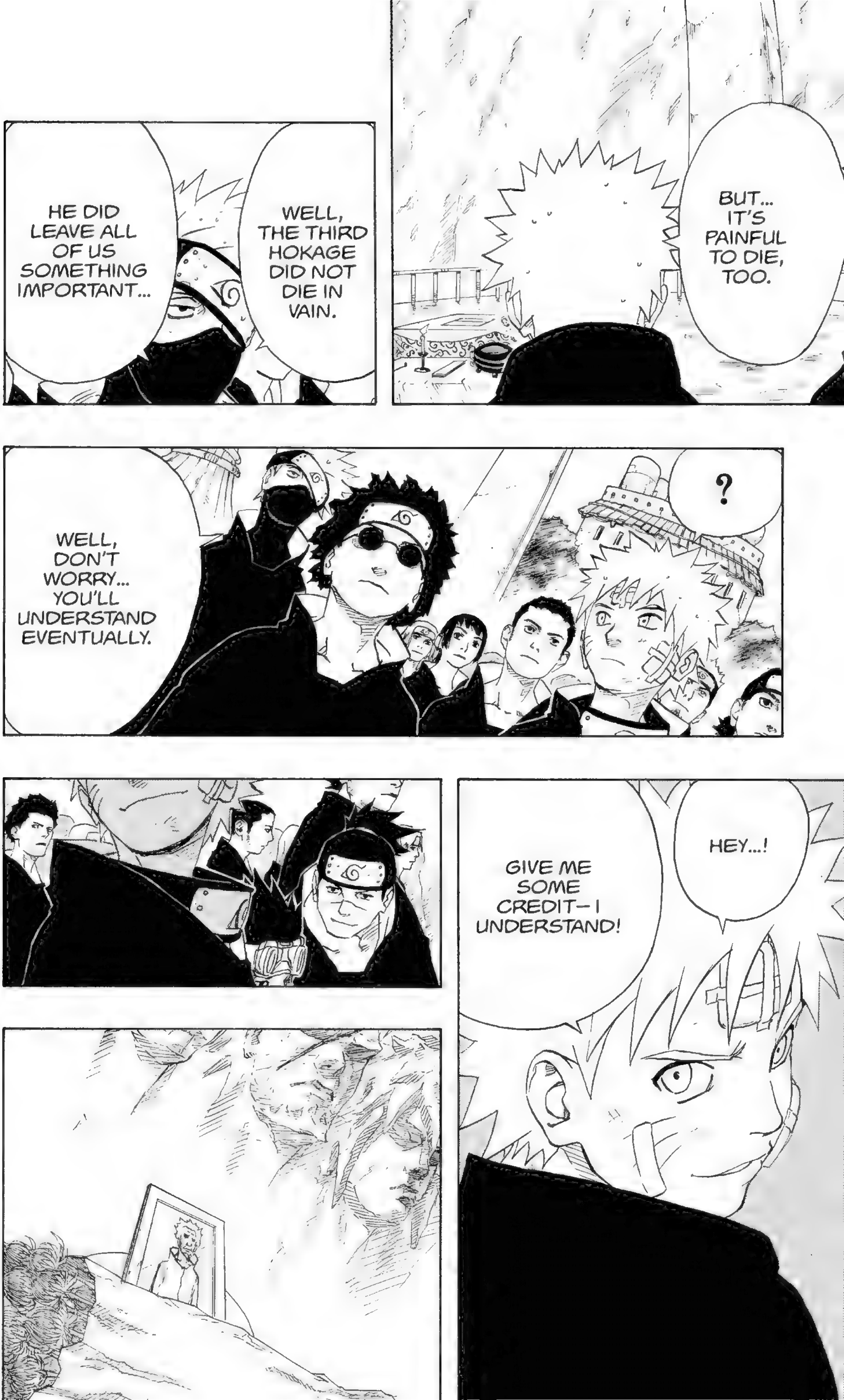

YOU COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM OROCHIMARU!
...
GRRR
MASTER SARUTOBI, YOU'RE **ALWAYS** "OROCHIMARU THIS" AND "OROCHIMARU THAT"!
BUT FOR WHEN I GO RESEARCHING, I USE TRANSPARENCY JUTSU!
I HAVEN'T BEEN CAUGHT YET!
...
... SHEESH ...
ALL RIGHT, LET'S SEE JUST HOW GOOD THESE SPYING JUTSU OF YOURS ARE...
...?!
I'M GOING WITH YOU NEXT TIME...
...
...
YOU OLD PERV, MASTER SARUTOBI ...


MASTER IRUKA...

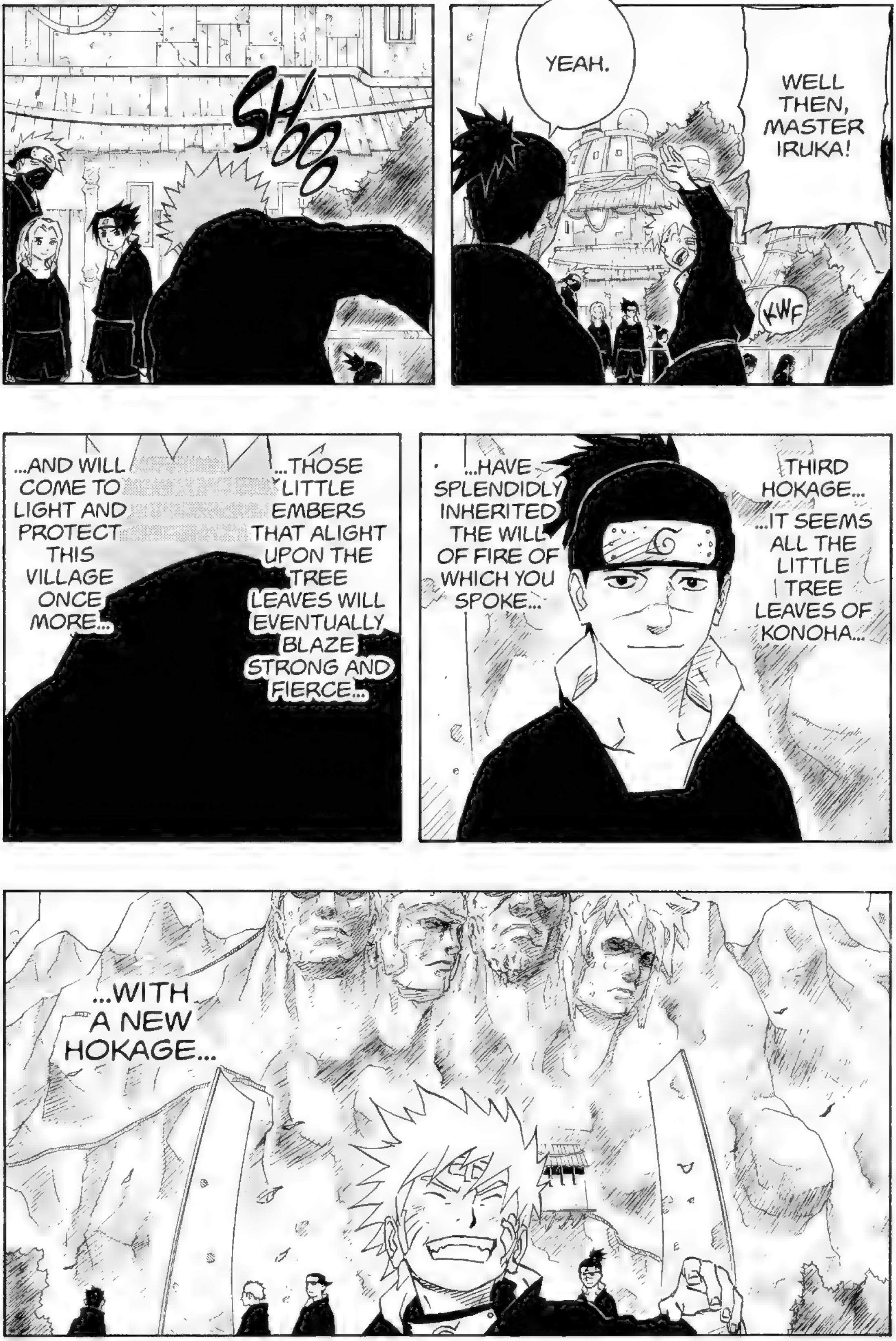

!
...WHY DO PEOPLE...
...RISK THEIR OWN LIVES FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS...?
...
WHEN ONE HUMAN DIES... THEY PASS AWAY.
ALONG WITH THEIR PAST, THEIR CURRENT LIFE, AND THEIR FUTURE...
MANY PEOPLE DIE ON MISSIONS OR THROUGH WAR. AND WHEN THEY DIE, IT HAPPENS STARTLINGLY QUICKLY... AND SIMPLY.
HAYATE IS ONE SUCH EXAMPLE...
THOSE WHO DIE HAVE DREAMS AND GOALS... BUT THEY ALL HAVE SOMETHING ELSE JUST AS IMPORTANT.

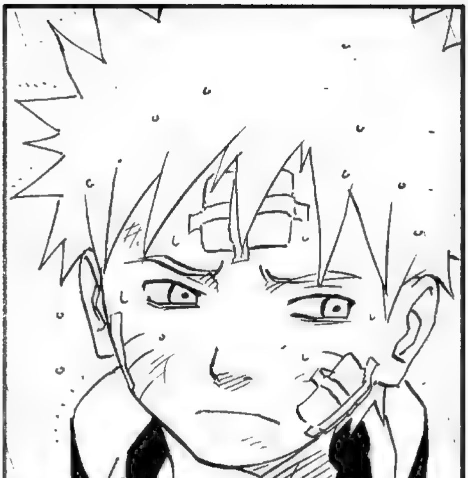
READ THIS WAY

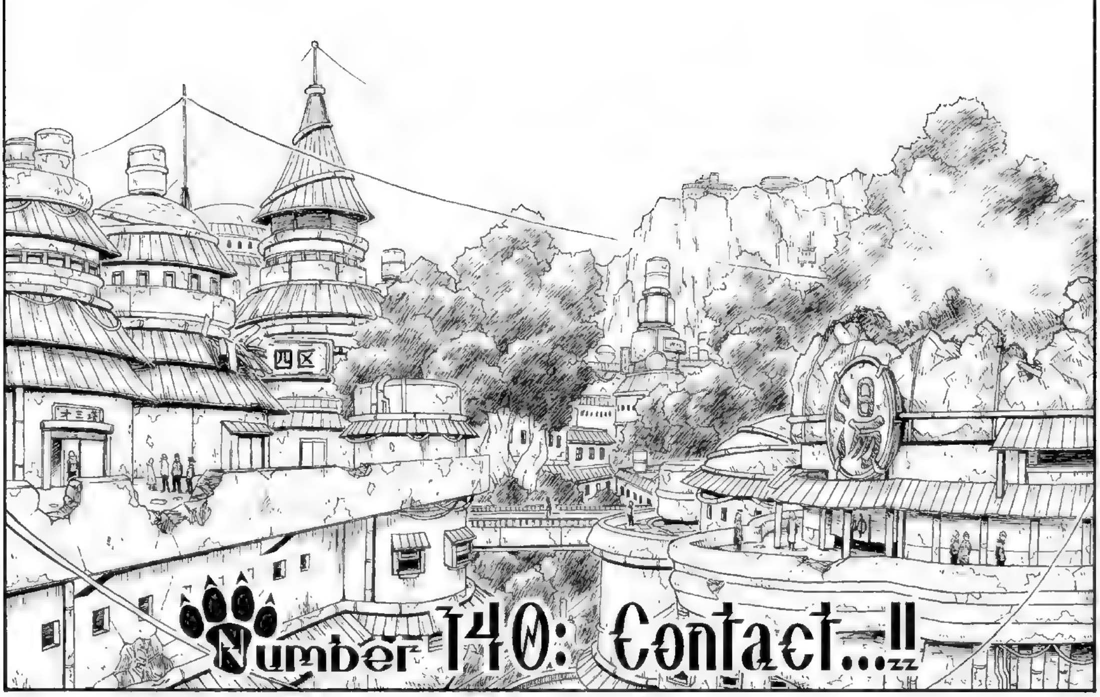

PARENTS, SIBLINGS, FRIENDS, THEIR FELLOW VILLAGERS, PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM...
BONDS FORM BETWEEN THEM AND THOSE WHO ARE PRECIOUS TO THEM FROM THE TIME THEY ARE BORN, THROUGH TRUSTING AND HELPING EACH OTHER...
THESE STRINGS THAT CONNECT THEM, AS TIME PASSES...
...GROW THICKER AND STRONGER...
THERE'S NO LOGIC OR REASON TO IT! PEOPLE JUST DO THINGS LIKE THAT...
...BECAUSE THEY HAVE PRECIOUS THINGS TO PROTECT...
...
YEAH... I THINK I'M STARTING... TO GET THAT NOW...


BUT... IT'S PAINFUL TO DIE, TOO.
WELL, THE THIRD HOKAGE DID NOT DIE IN VAIN.
HE DID LEAVE ALL OF US SOMETHING IMPORTANT...
?
WELL, DON'T WORRY... YOU'LL UNDERSTAND EVENTUALLY.
HEY...!
GIVE ME SOME CREDIT—I UNDERSTAND!

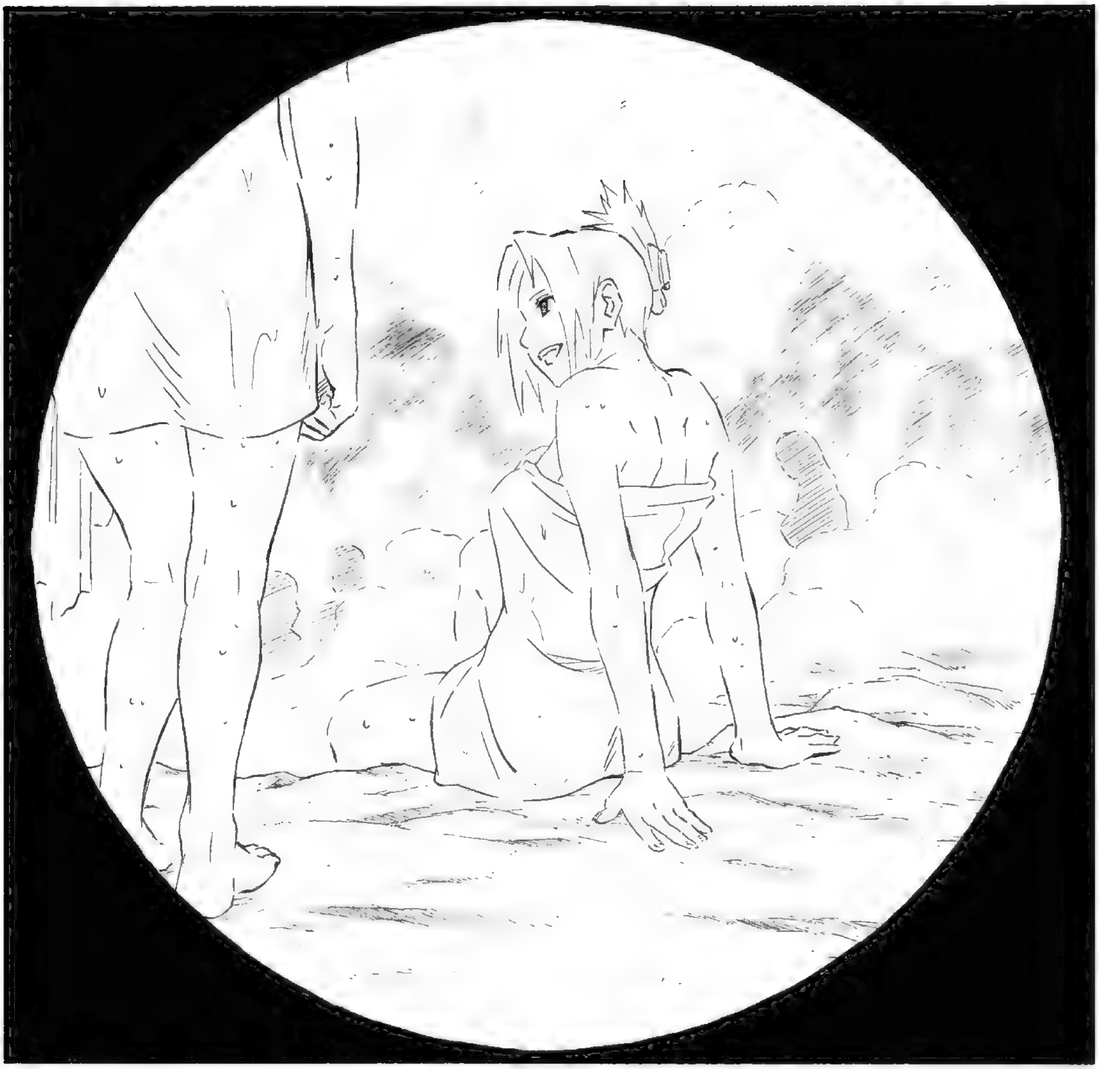
READ THIS WAY

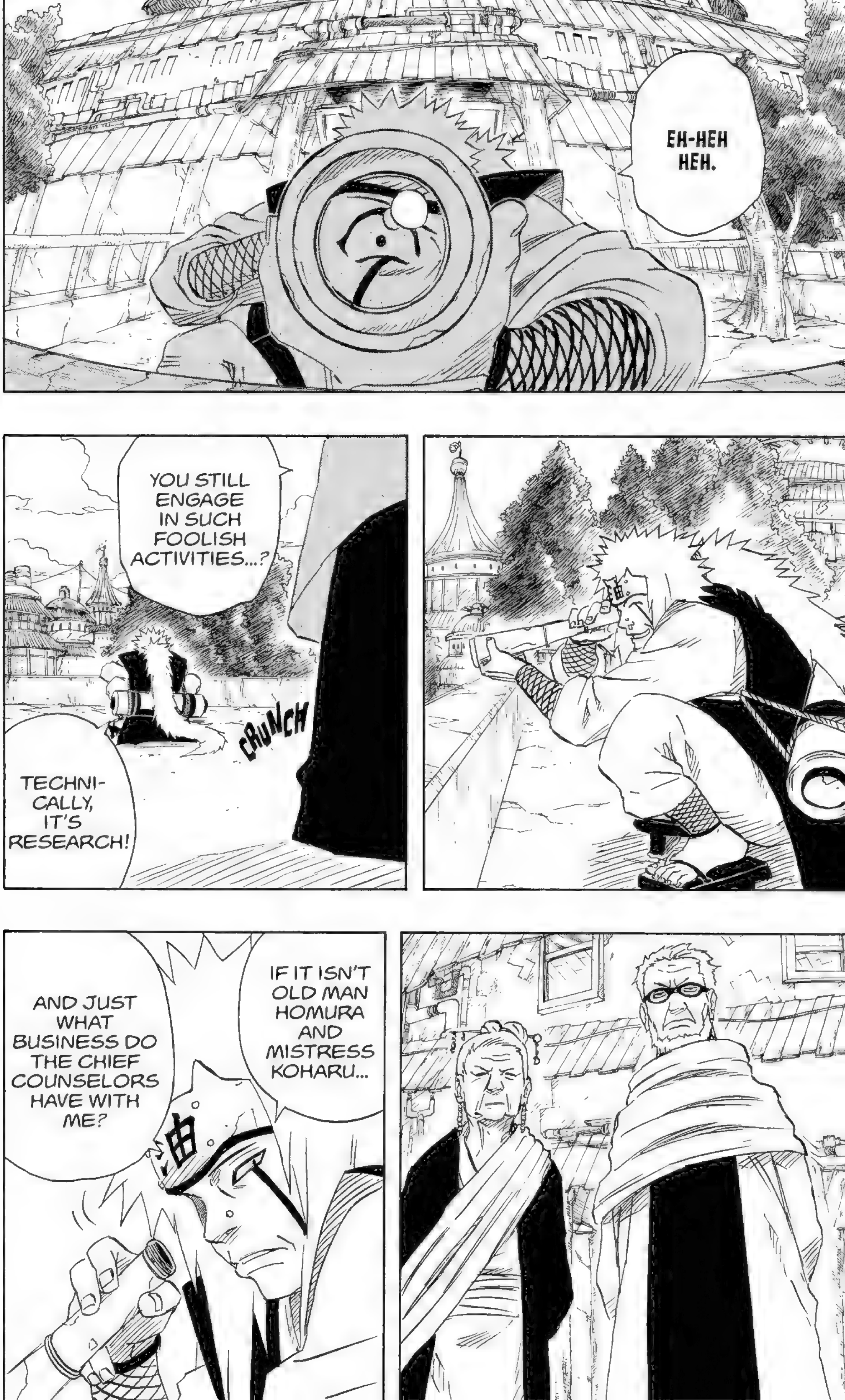

WELL THEN, MASTER IRUKA!
YEAH.
KWF
SHOO
THIRD HOKAGE... ...IT SEEMS ALL THE LITTLE TREE LEAVES OF KONOHA...
...HAVE SPLENDIDLY INHERITED THE WILL OF FIRE OF WHICH YOU SPOKE...
...THOSE LITTLE EMBERS THAT ALIGHT UPON THE TREE LEAVES WILL EVENTUALLY BLAZE STRONG AND FIERCE...
...AND WILL COME TO LIGHT AND PROTECT THIS VILLAGE ONCE MORE...
...WITH A NEW HOKAGE...

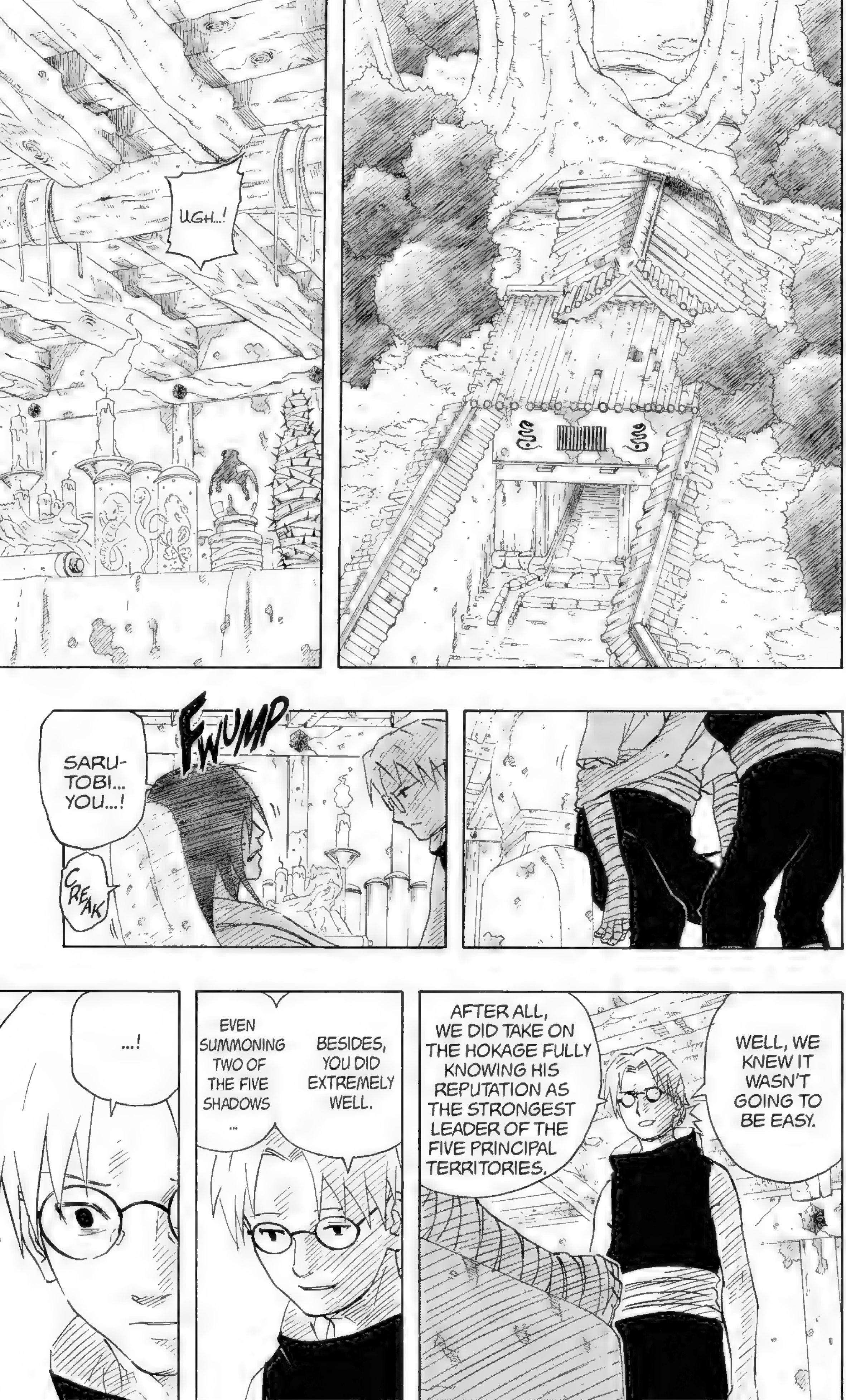


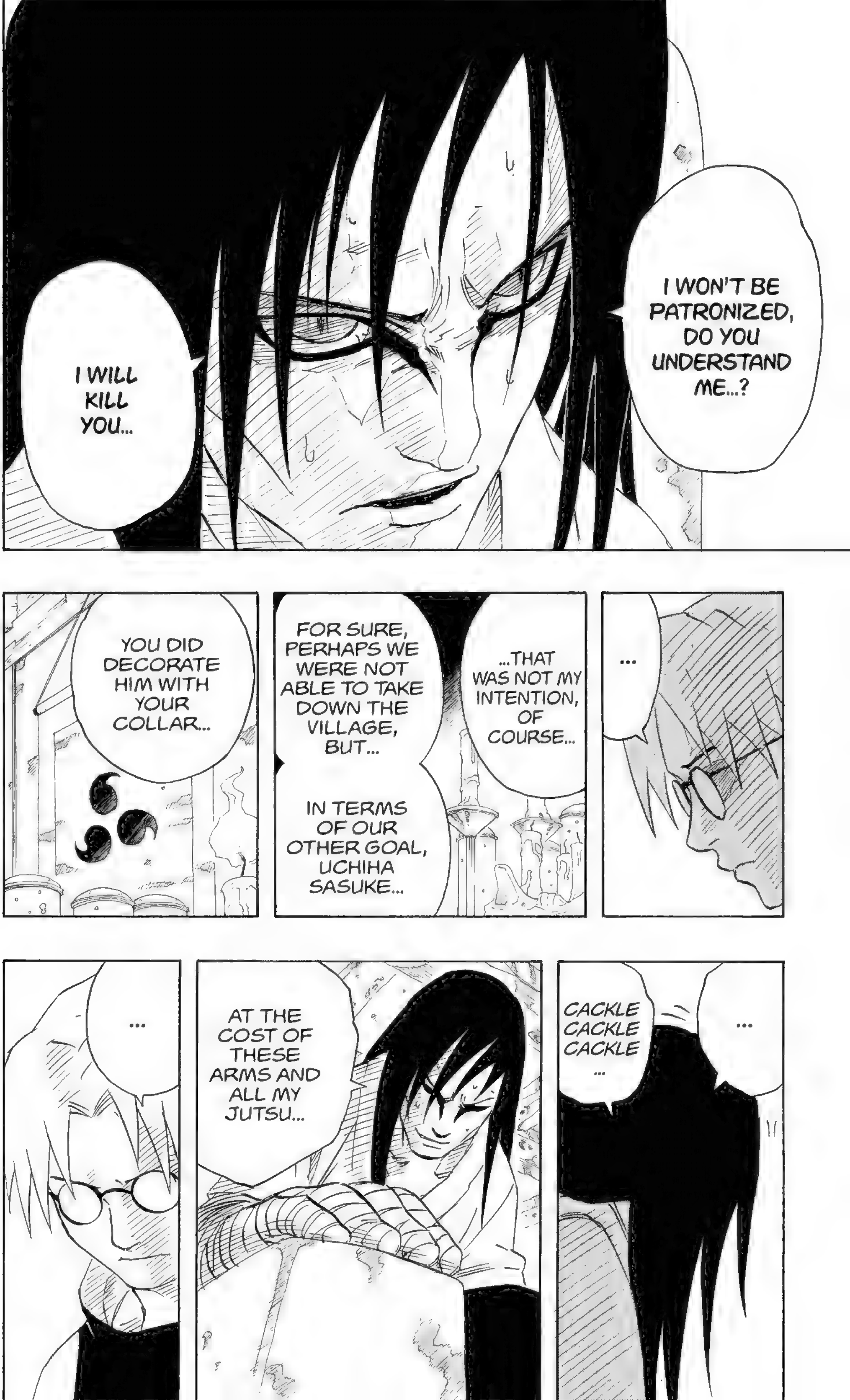


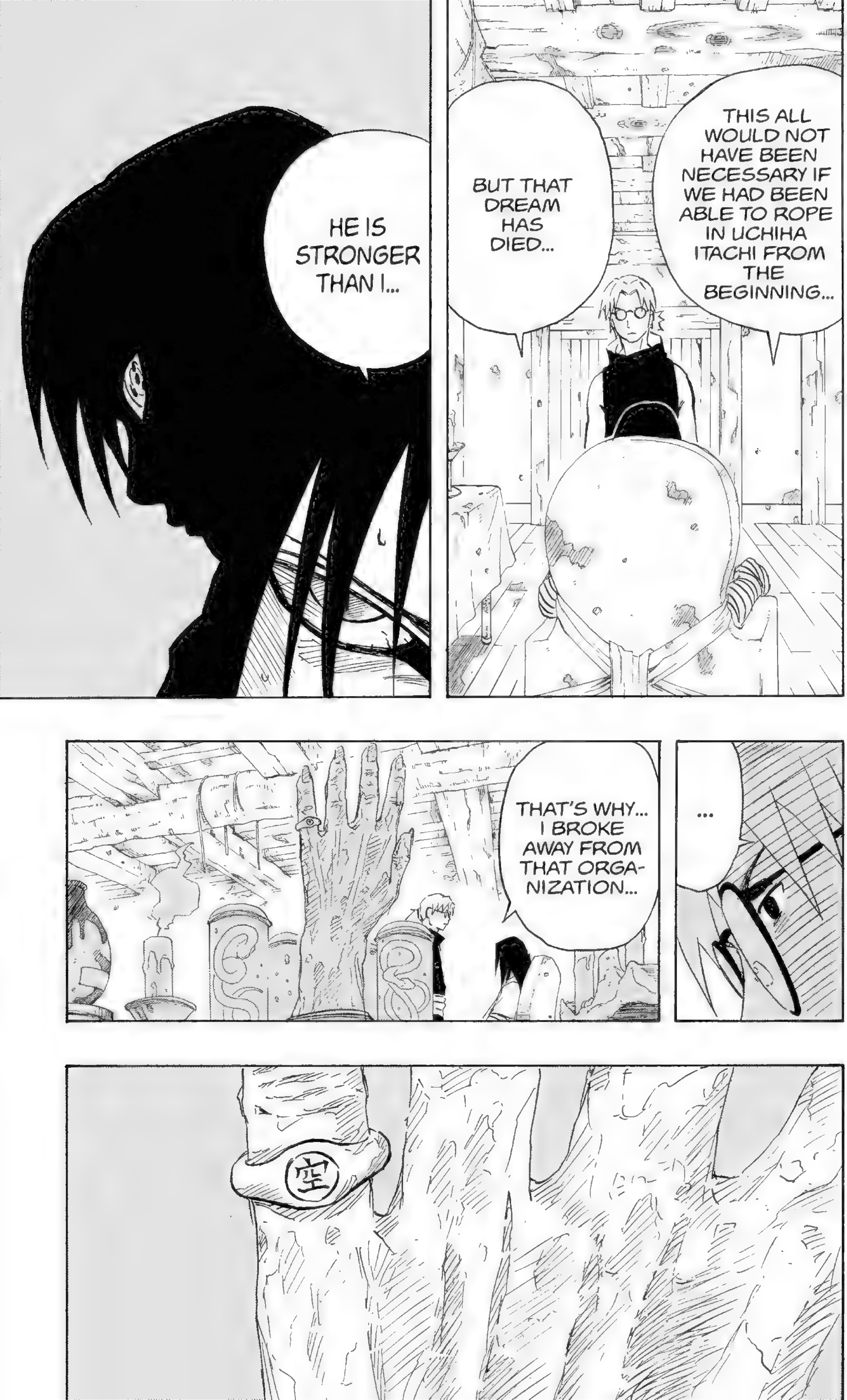
# Number 140: Contact...!!

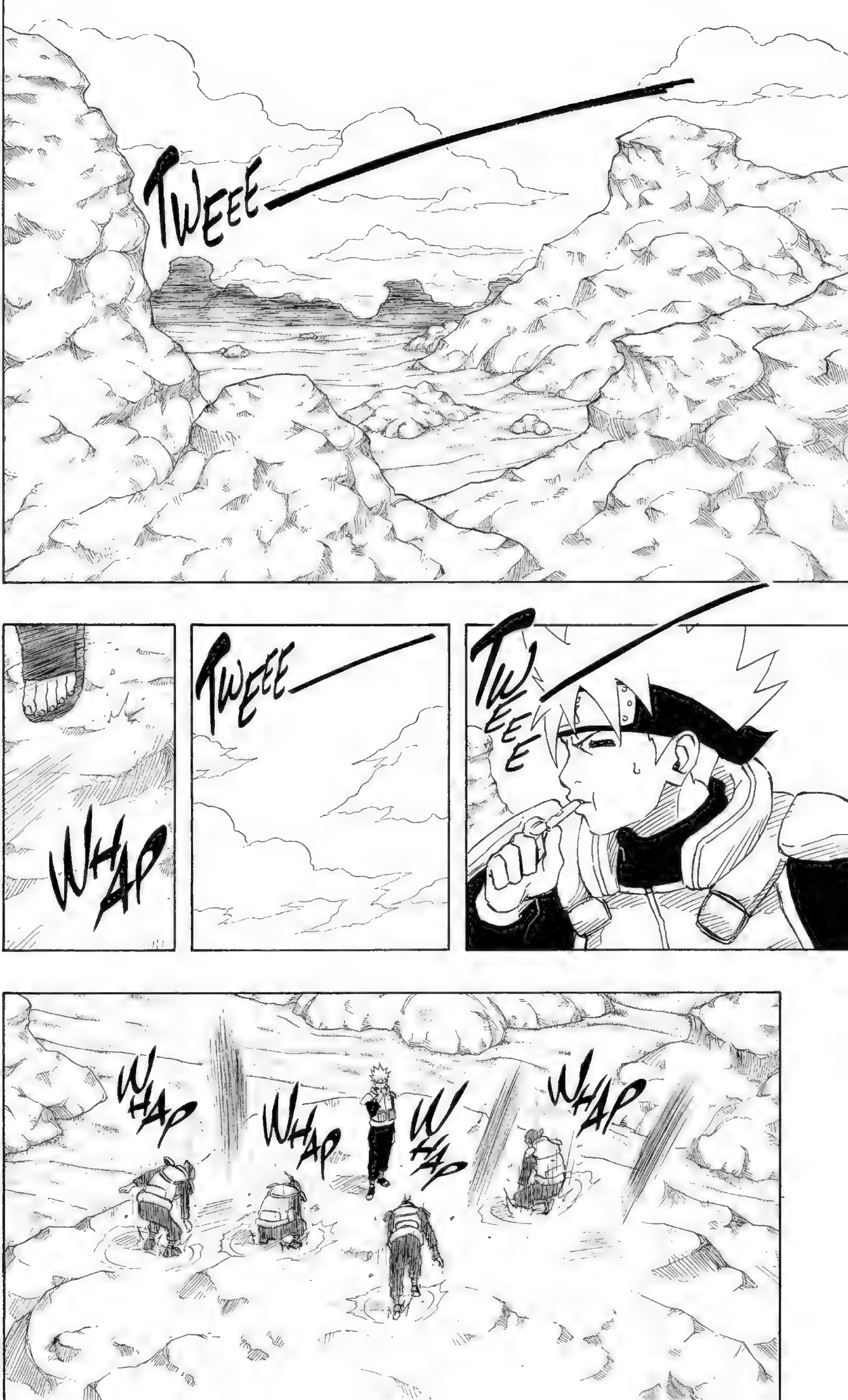



EH-HEH HEH.
YOU STILL ENGAGE IN SUCH FOOLISH ACTIVITIES...?
CRUNCH
TECHNICALLY, IT'S RESEARCH!
IF IT ISN'T OLD MAN HOMURA AND MISTRESS KOHARU...
AND JUST WHAT BUSINESS DO THE CHIEF COUNSELORS HAVE WITH ME?

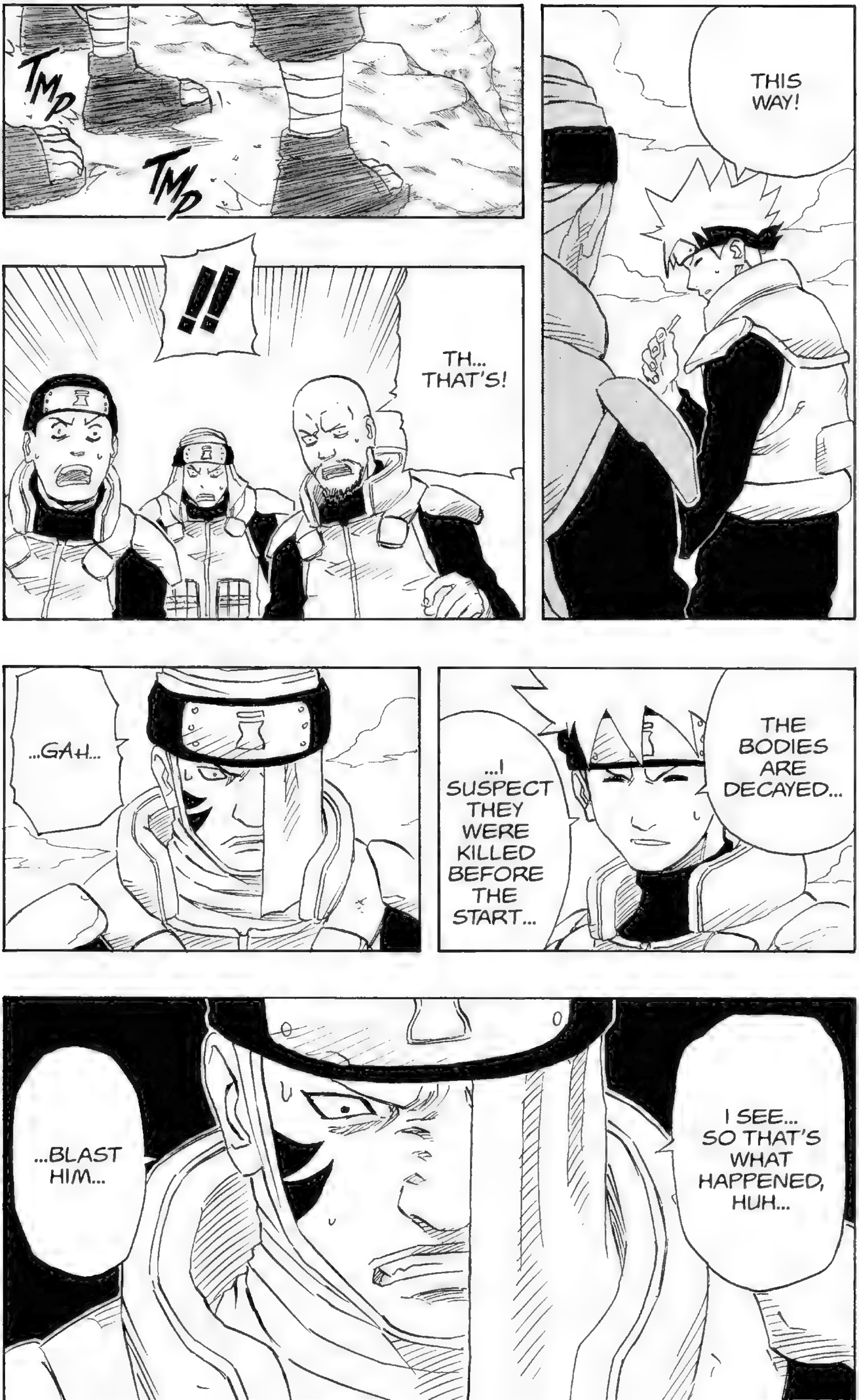

UGH...!
FWUMP
SARU-TOBI... YOU...!
CREAK
WELL, WE KNEW IT WASN'T GOING TO BE EASY.
AFTER ALL, WE DID TAKE ON THE HOKAGE FULLY KNOWING HIS REPUTATION AS THE STRONGEST LEADER OF THE FIVE PRINCIPAL TERRITORIES.
BESIDES, YOU DID EXTREMELY WELL.
EVEN SUMMONING TWO OF THE FIVE SHADOWS ...
...!

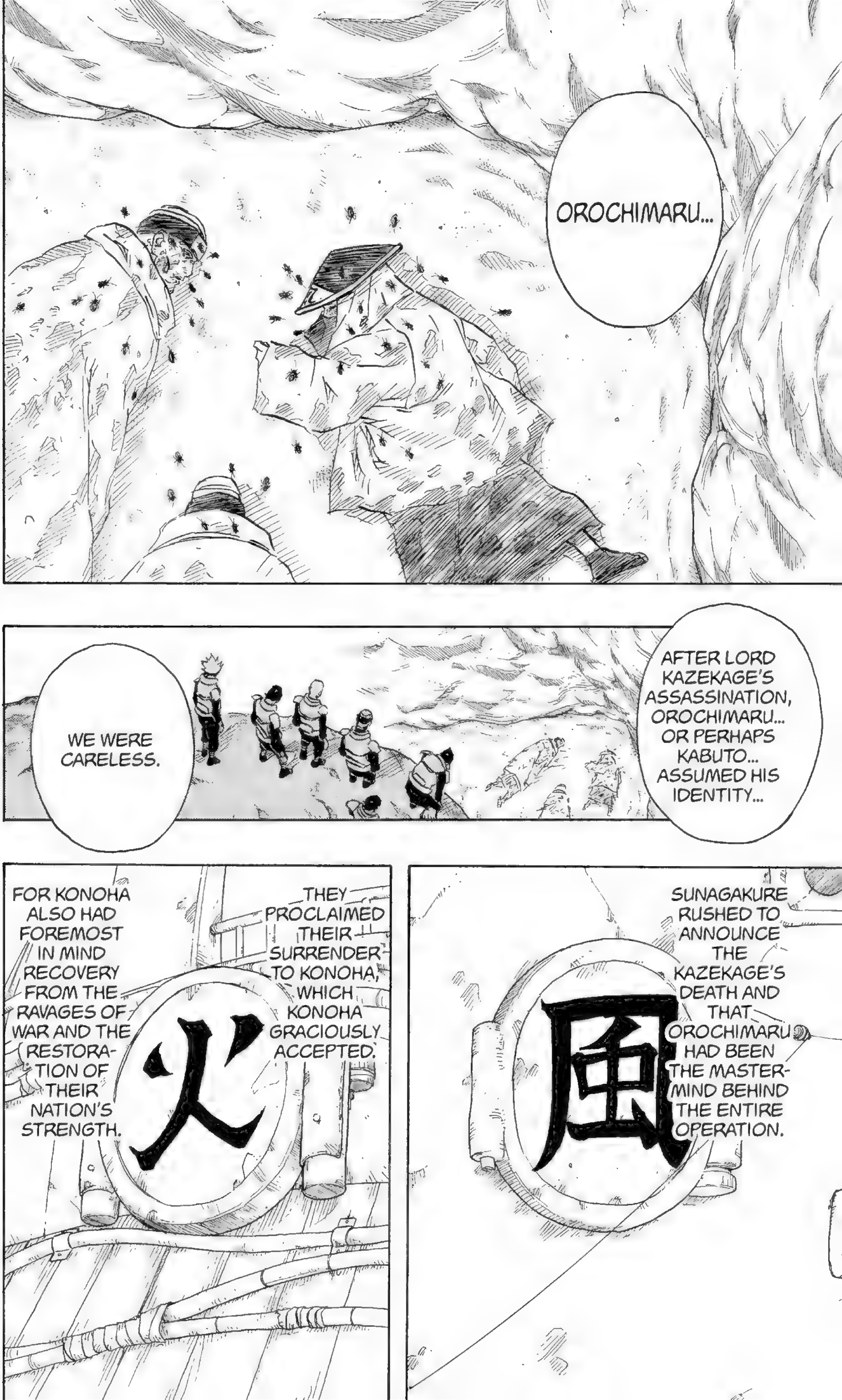

I WON'T BE PATRONIZED, DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME...?
I WILL KILL YOU...
...
...THAT WAS NOT MY INTENTION, OF COURSE...
FOR SURE, PERHAPS WE WERE NOT ABLE TO TAKE DOWN THE VILLAGE, BUT...
IN TERMS OF OUR OTHER GOAL, UCHIHA SASUKE...
YOU DID DECORATE HIM WITH YOUR COLLAR...
...
CACKLE CACKLE CACKLE ...
AT THE COST OF THESE ARMS AND ALL MY JUTSU...
...


THIS ALL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY IF WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO ROPE IN UCHIHA ITACHI FROM THE BEGINNING...
BUT THAT DREAM HAS DIED...
HE IS STRONGER THAN I...
...
THAT'S WHY... I BROKE AWAY FROM THAT ORGANIZATION...
空

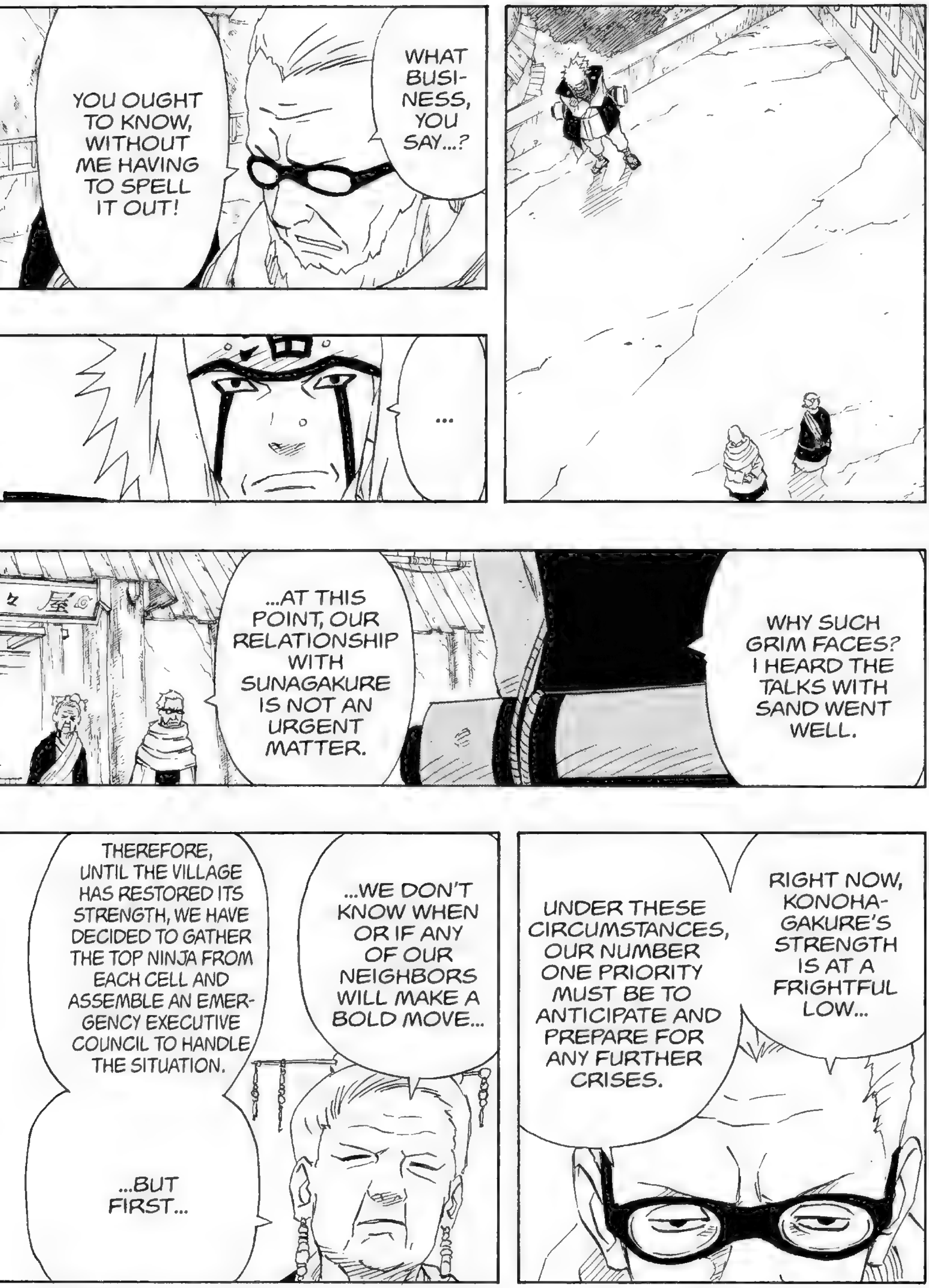

TWEEE
TWEEE
TWEEE
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP

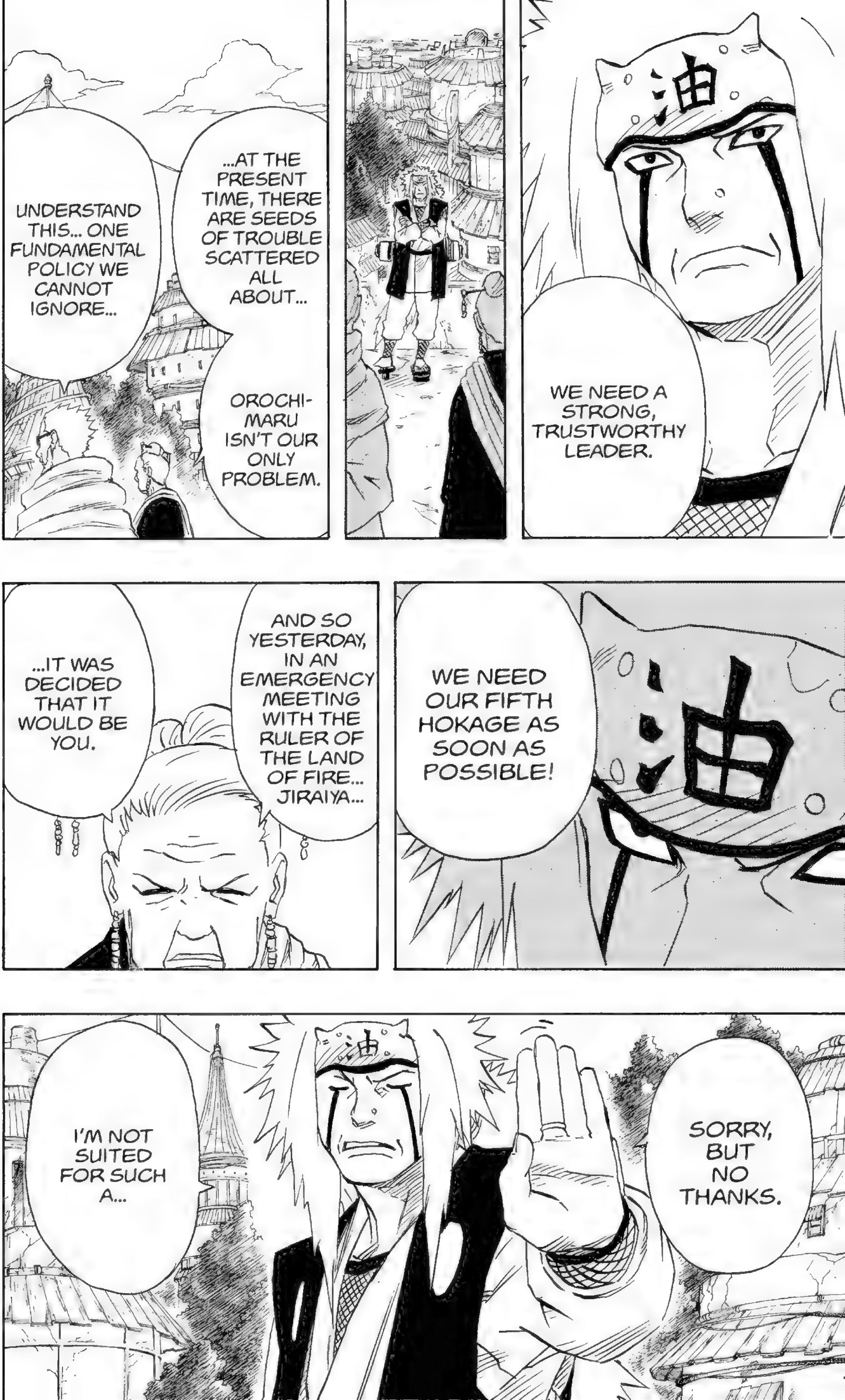
READ THIS WAY


THIS WAY!
TMP
TMP
!!
TH... THAT'S!
THE BODIES ARE DECAYED...
...I SUSPECT THEY WERE KILLED BEFORE THE START...
...GAH...
I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, HUH...
...BLAST HIM...

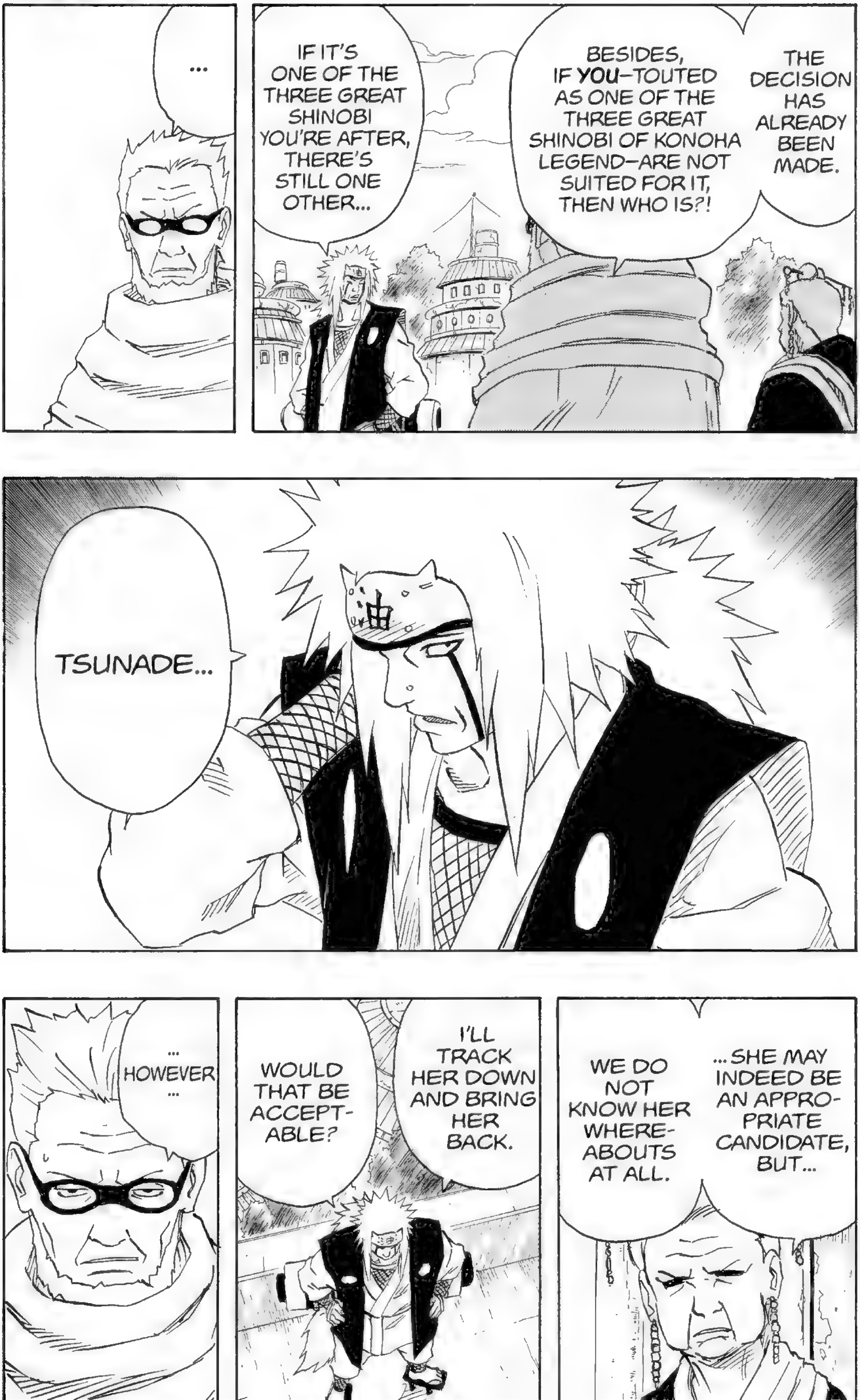

OROCHIMARU...
AFTER LORD KAZEKAGE'S ASSASSINATION, OROCHIMARU... OR PERHAPS KABUTO... ASSUMED HIS IDENTITY...
WE WERE CARELESS.
SUNAGAKURE RUSHED TO ANNOUNCE THE KAZEKAGE'S DEATH AND THAT OROCHIMARU HAD BEEN THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE ENTIRE OPERATION.
風
THEY PROCLAIMED THEIR SURRENDER TO KONOHA, WHICH KONOHA GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED.
火
FOR KONOHA ALSO HAD FOREMOST IN MIND RECOVERY FROM THE RAVAGES OF WAR AND THE RESTORATION OF THEIR NATION'S STRENGTH.

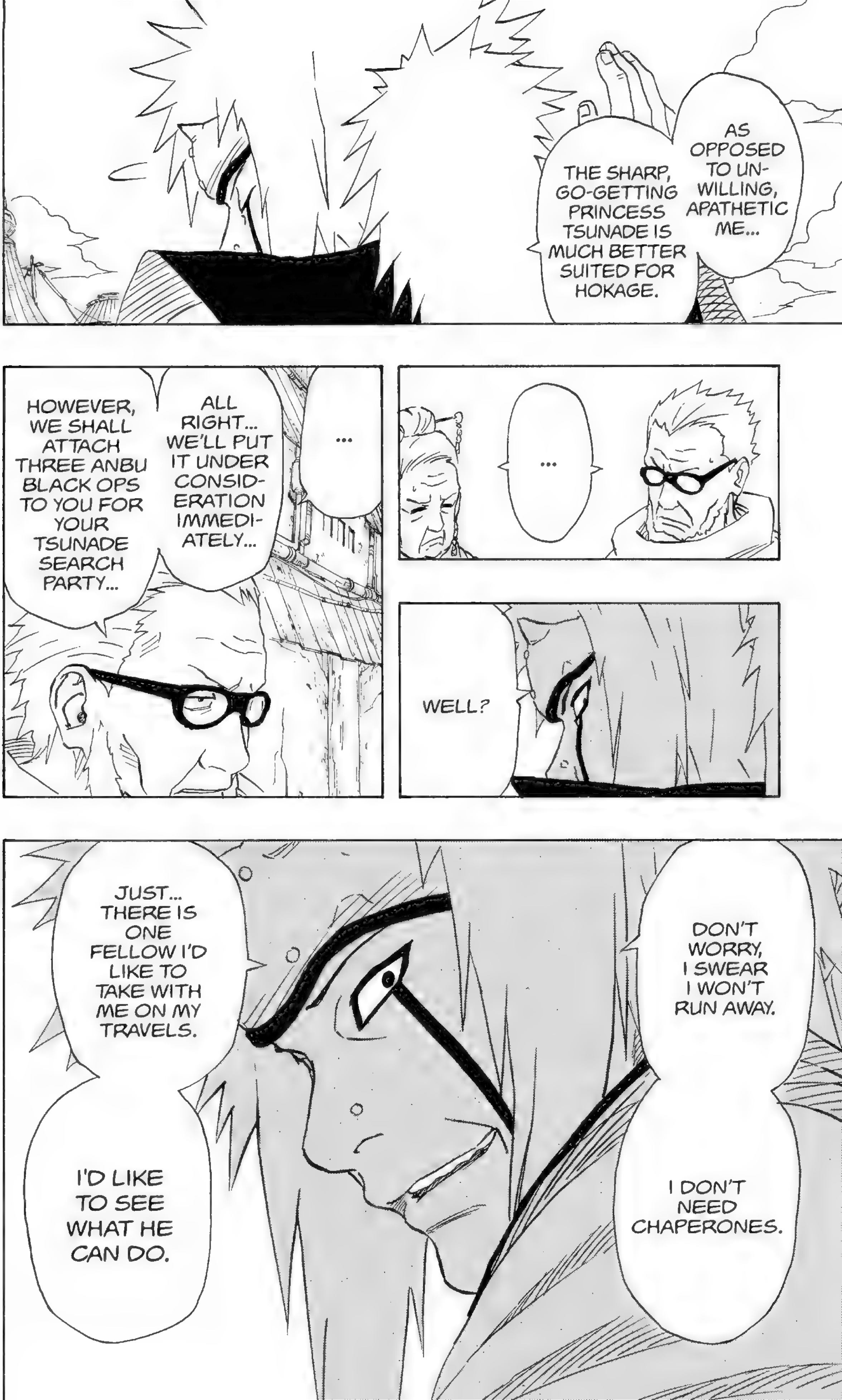
READ THIS WAY

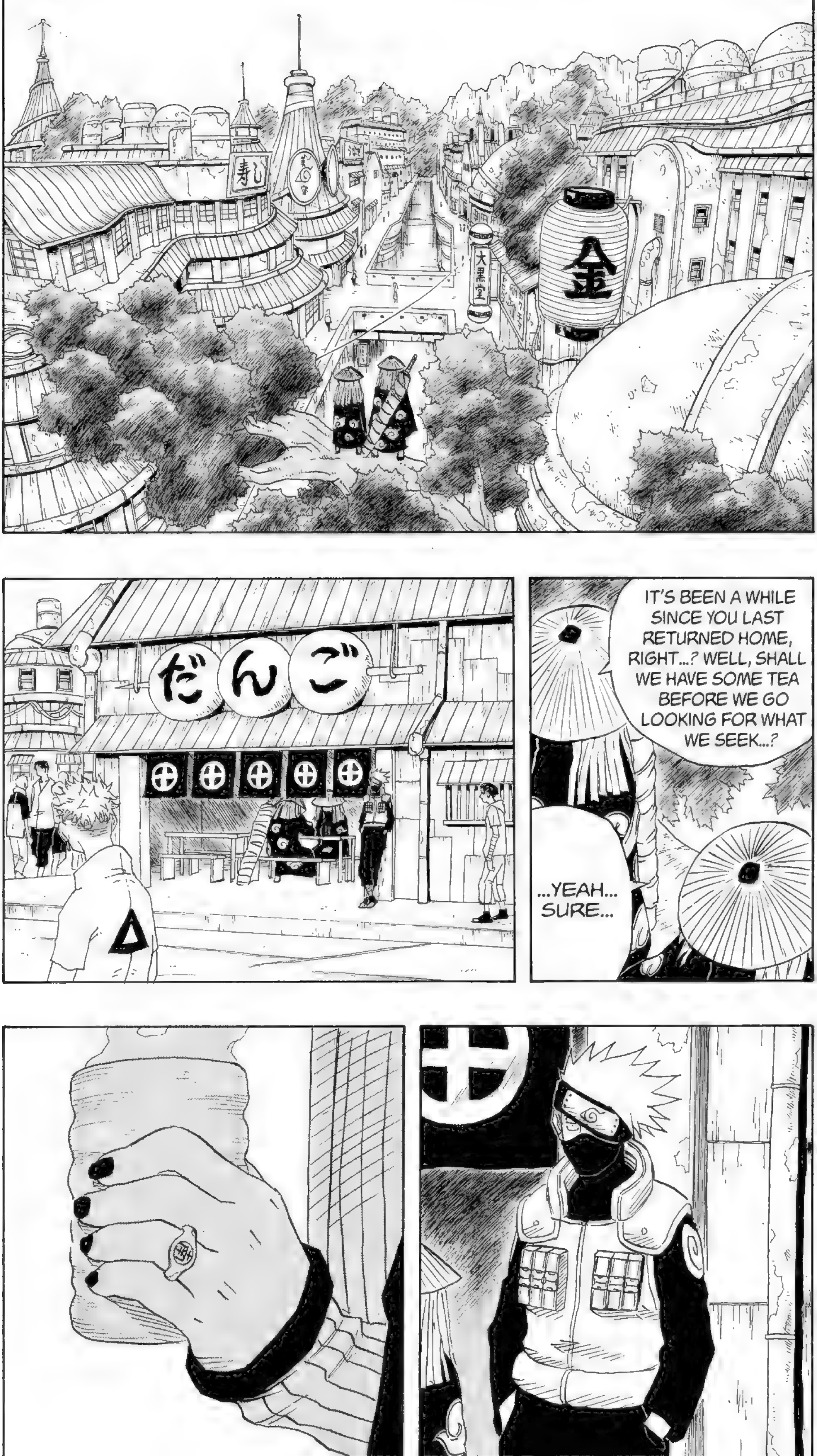

WHAT BUSINESS, YOU SAY...?
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW, WITHOUT ME HAVING TO SPELL IT OUT!
...
WHY SUCH GRIM FACES? I HEARD THE TALKS WITH SAND WENT WELL.
...AT THIS POINT, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SUNAGAKURE IS NOT AN URGENT MATTER.
RIGHT NOW, KONOHAGAKURE'S STRENGTH IS AT A FRIGHTFUL LOW...
UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY MUST BE TO ANTICIPATE AND PREPARE FOR ANY FURTHER CRISES.
...WE DON'T KNOW WHEN OR IF ANY OF OUR NEIGHBORS WILL MAKE A BOLD MOVE...
THEREFORE, UNTIL THE VILLAGE HAS RESTORED ITS STRENGTH, WE HAVE DECIDED TO GATHER THE TOP NINJA FROM EACH CELL AND ASSEMBLE AN EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO HANDLE THE SITUATION.
...BUT FIRST...

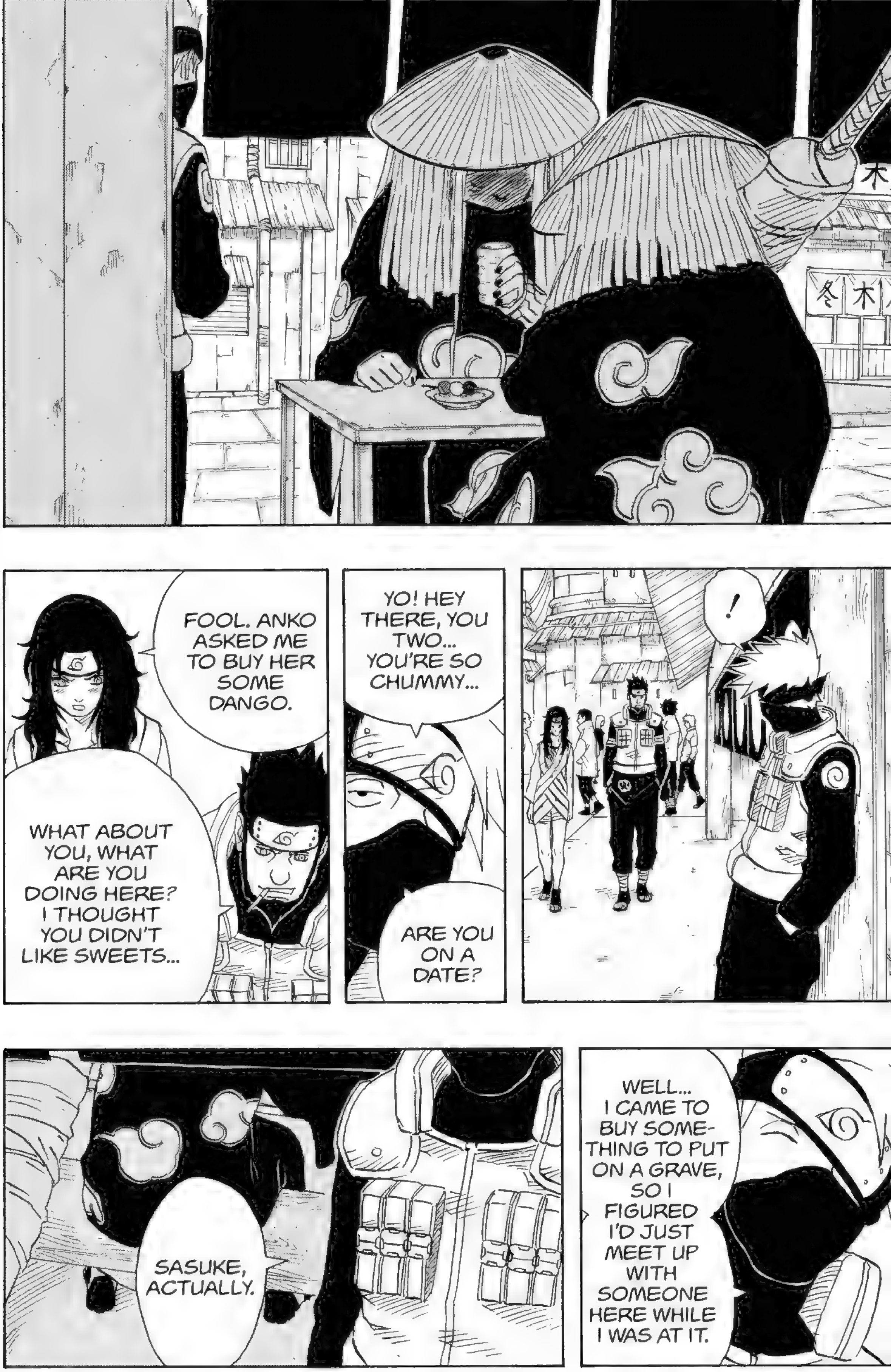

油
WE NEED A STRONG, TRUSTWORTHY LEADER.
...AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE ARE SEEDS OF TROUBLE SCATTERED ALL ABOUT...
OROCHIMARU ISN'T OUR ONLY PROBLEM.
UNDERSTAND THIS... ONE FUNDAMENTAL POLICY WE CANNOT IGNORE...
WE NEED OUR FIFTH HOKAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
AND SO YESTERDAY, IN AN EMERGENCY MEETING WITH THE RULER OF THE LAND OF FIRE... JIRAIYA...
...IT WAS DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE YOU.
SORRY, BUT NO THANKS.
I'M NOT SUITED FOR SUCH A...

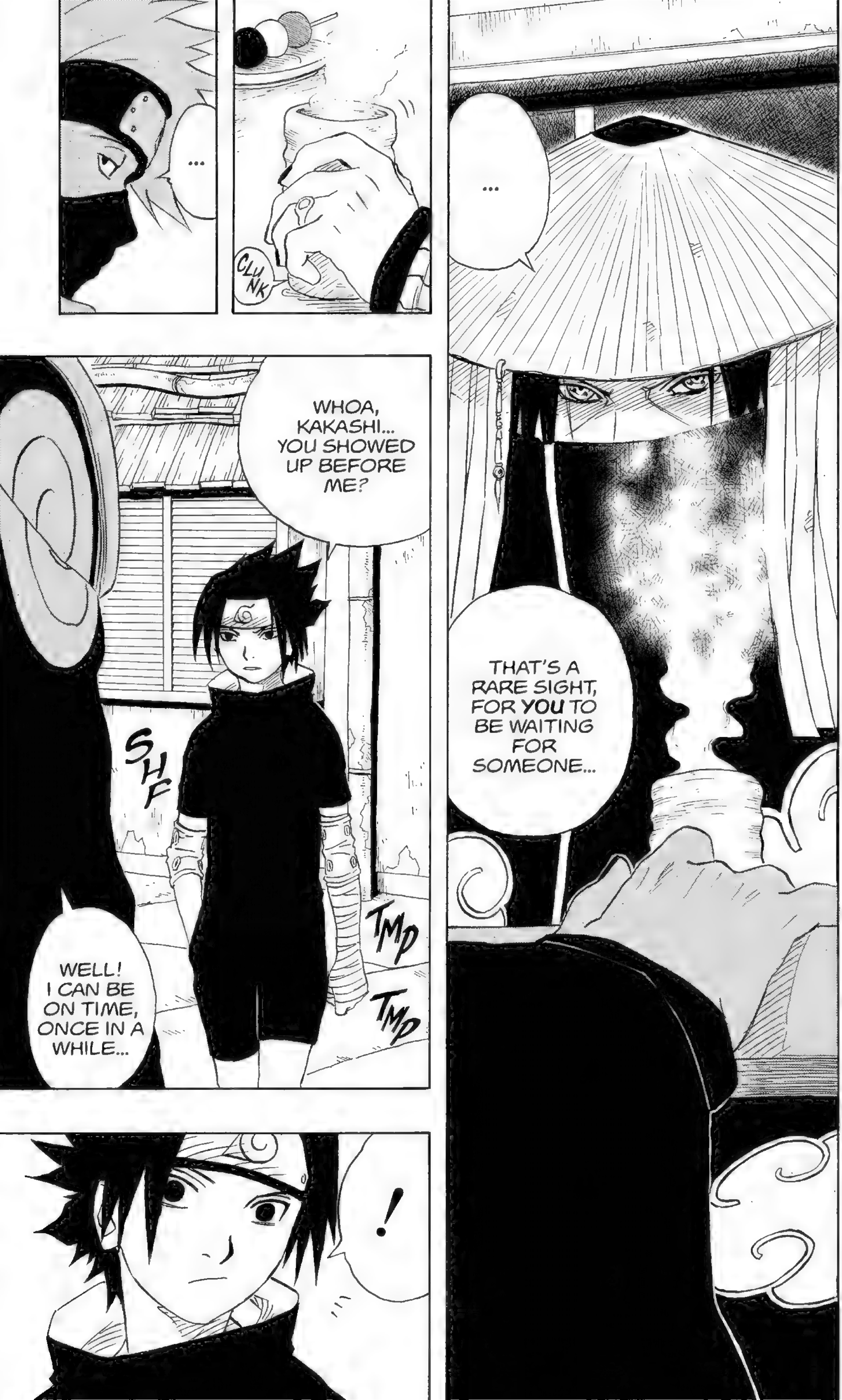
READ THIS WAY

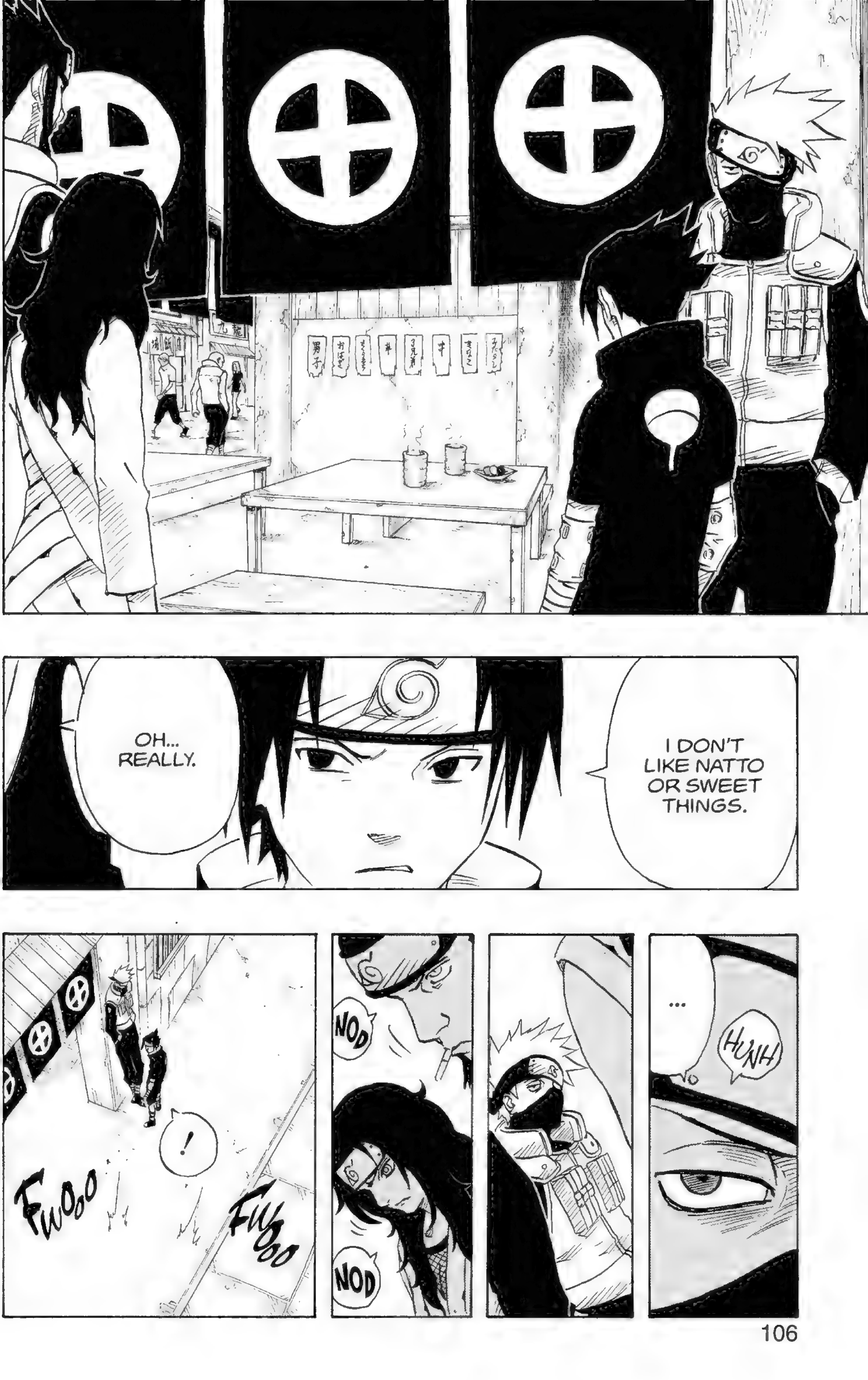

THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE.
BESIDES, IF **YOU**—TOUTED AS ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI OF KONOHA LEGEND—ARE NOT SUITED FOR IT, THEN WHO IS?!
IF IT'S ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI YOU'RE AFTER, THERE'S STILL ONE OTHER...
...
TSUNADE...
...SHE MAY INDEED BE AN APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE, BUT...
WE DO NOT KNOW HER WHEREABOUTS AT ALL.
I'LL TRACK HER DOWN AND BRING HER BACK.
WOULD THAT BE ACCEPTABLE?
...HOWEVER...

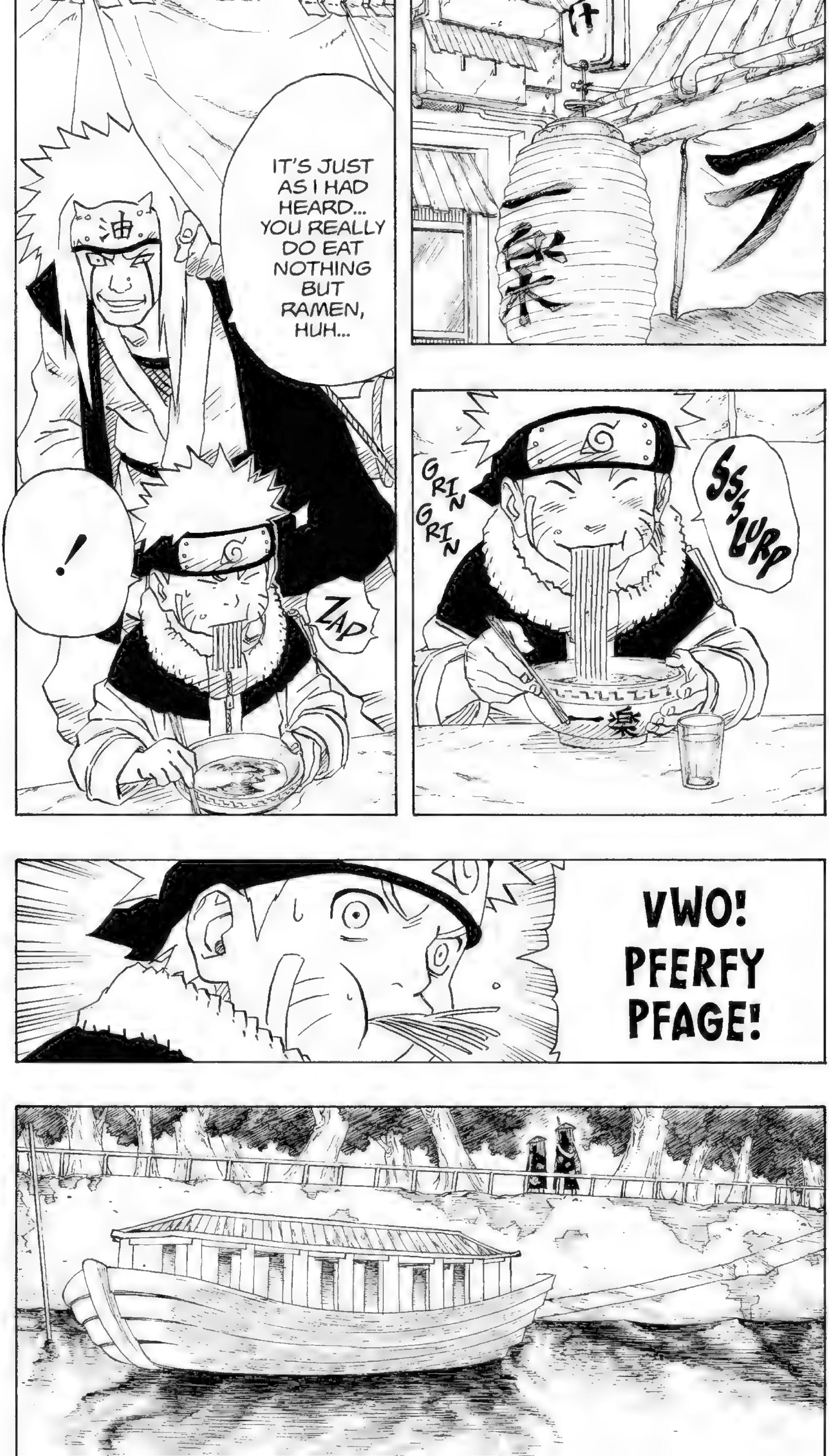

AS OPPOSED TO UNWILLING, APATHETIC ME...
THE SHARP, GO-GETTING PRINCESS TSUNADE IS MUCH BETTER SUITED FOR HOKAGE.
...
WELL?
...
ALL RIGHT... WE'LL PUT IT UNDER CONSIDERATION IMMEDIATELY...
HOWEVER, WE SHALL ATTACH THREE ANBU BLACK OPS TO YOU FOR YOUR TSUNADE SEARCH PARTY...
DON'T WORRY, I SWEAR I WON'T RUN AWAY.
I DON'T NEED CHAPERONES.
JUST... THERE IS ONE FELLOW I'D LIKE TO TAKE WITH ME ON MY TRAVELS.
I'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT HE CAN DO.

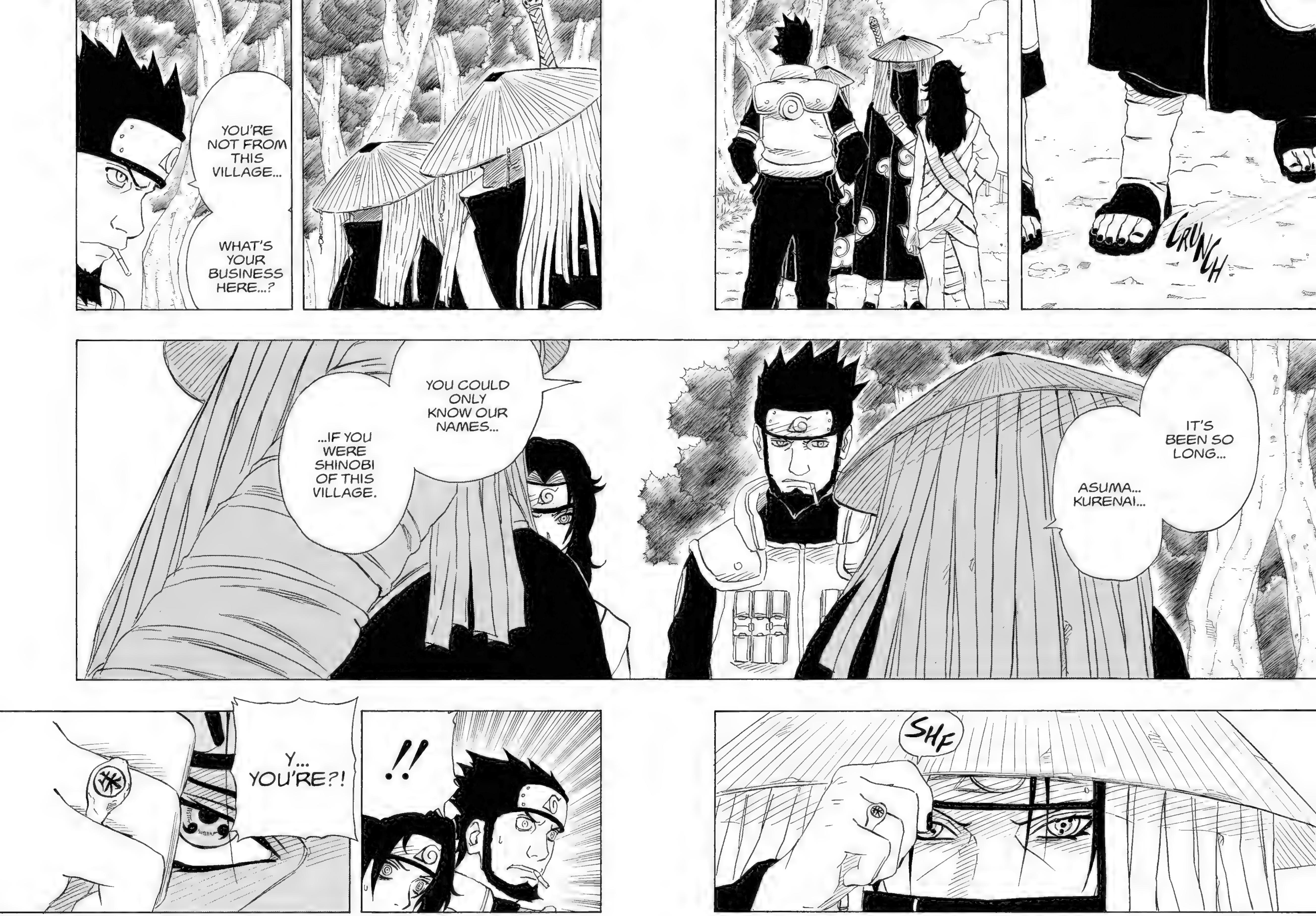

寿し
大黒堂
金
だんご
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU LAST RETURNED HOME, RIGHT...? WELL, SHALL WE HAVE SOME TEA BEFORE WE GO LOOKING FOR WHAT WE SEEK...?
...YEAH... SURE...


!
YO! HEY THERE, YOU TWO... YOU'RE SO CHUMMY...
ARE YOU ON A DATE?
FOOL. ANKO ASKED ME TO BUY HER SOME DANGO.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T LIKE SWEETS...
WELL... I CAME TO BUY SOMETHING TO PUT ON A GRAVE, SO I FIGURED I'D JUST MEET UP WITH SOMEONE HERE WHILE I WAS AT IT.
SASUKE, ACTUALLY.


...
THAT'S A RARE SIGHT, FOR YOU TO BE WAITING FOR SOMEONE...
CLUNK
...
WHOA, KAKASHI... YOU SHOWED UP BEFORE ME?
SHF
TMP
TMP
WELL! I CAN BE ON TIME, ONCE IN A WHILE...
!


I DON'T LIKE NATTO OR SWEET THINGS.
OH... REALLY.
...
HUNH
NOD
NOD
!
FWOOO
FWOOO


け
一楽
ラ
SSSLURP
GRIN GRIN
一楽
IT'S JUST AS I HAD HEARD... YOU REALLY DO EAT NOTHING BUT RAMEN, HUH...
油
ZAP
!
VWO! PFERFY PFAGE!


CRUNCH
YOU'RE NOT FROM THIS VILLAGE...
WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS HERE...?
IT'S BEEN SO LONG...
ASUMA... KURENAI...
YOU COULD ONLY KNOW OUR NAMES...
...IF YOU WERE SHINOBI OF THIS VILLAGE.
SHF
!!
Y... YOU'RE?!

## THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
## MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 24 CHAPTER 2

MY FRIEND TOLD ME, "USUTA SENSEI WAS CONTACTED BY THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT ABOUT ONE WEEK AGO"!

"WHAT!" MEANS WHAT? AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN CONTACTED YET, THEN!? DON'T TELL ME I DIDN'T MAKE IT?!! I FELT DEFLATED, TOOK OFF FROM SCHOOL, GOT SULKY, AND PLAYED VIDEO GAMES. HOWEVER, WHILE I WAS PLAYING VIDEO GAMES, IN THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART... BUT IF WHOEVER WON IS CONTACTED TOO EARLY AND OUT OF BLIND ECSTASY POSTS HIS VICTORY ON THE INTERNET, EVERYONE WILL KNOW THE RESULT BEFORE IT'S ANNOUNCED IN *JUMP*! IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN, THAT WOULD BE BAD! IT'S JUST NOT KOSHER! THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THEY DON'T CONTACT YOU UNTIL THAT DAY OR AT THE EARLIEST THE DAY BEFORE *JUMP* HITS THE BOOKSTORES! SURELY! I KEPT SILENTLY MAKING SUCH EXCUSES TO MYSELF AND PRAYED THAT I WOULD HEAR FROM THEM.

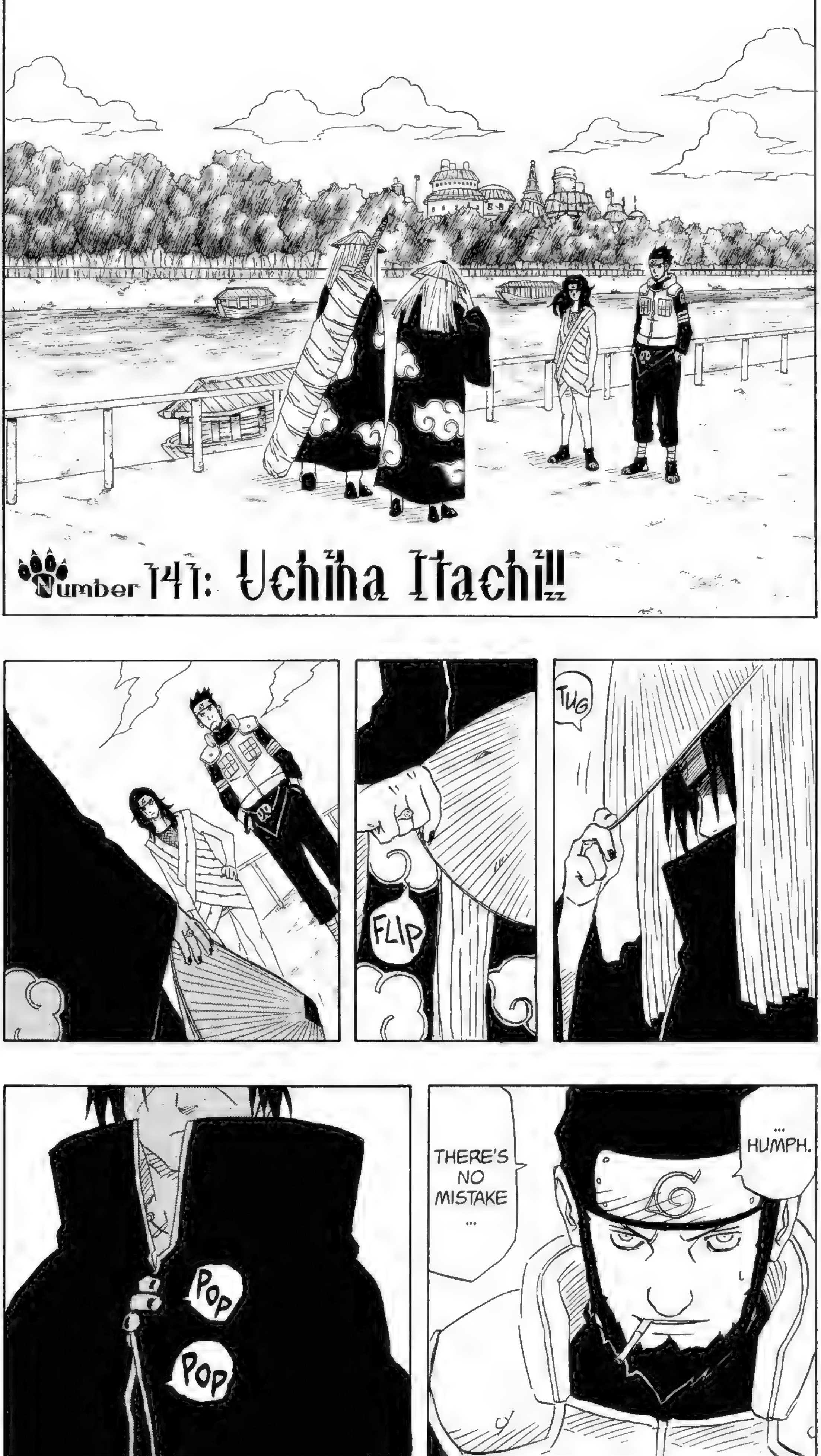
AND THEN, IT WAS FINALLY THE DAY BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT! I ENDED UP STAYING HOME THE WHOLE DAY, THINKING THAT I MIGHT GET A CALL, BUT THE DAY ENDED WITHOUT ANY WORD. THAT NIGHT, I HAD TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP, STAYING UP UNTIL MIDNIGHT ALL ANXIOUS. AND THEN, JUST AS I STARTED FEELING MYSELF NOD OFF... THE PHONE RANG...

I PICKED THE RECEIVER UP AND PUT IT TO MY EAR. MY HEART FELT LIKE IT WAS GOING TO BURST! "HELLO... THIS IS KISHIMOTO." THEN... "HELLO, THIS IS *WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP* CALLING..." "...YES?!" I IMMEDIATELY BLURTED... "WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR "KARAKURI" HAS BEEN SELECTED AS THIS ROUND'S WINNER! CONGRATULATIONS!" WHEN I HEARD THAT, I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT MY HEART HAD BURST, IT **POUNDED!** SO HARD, AND THEN I WOKE UP...

...IT HAD ALL BEEN A DREAM. I'M DEAD SERIOUS!! I WAS SO BLUE ONCE I WAS COMPLETELY AWAKE!

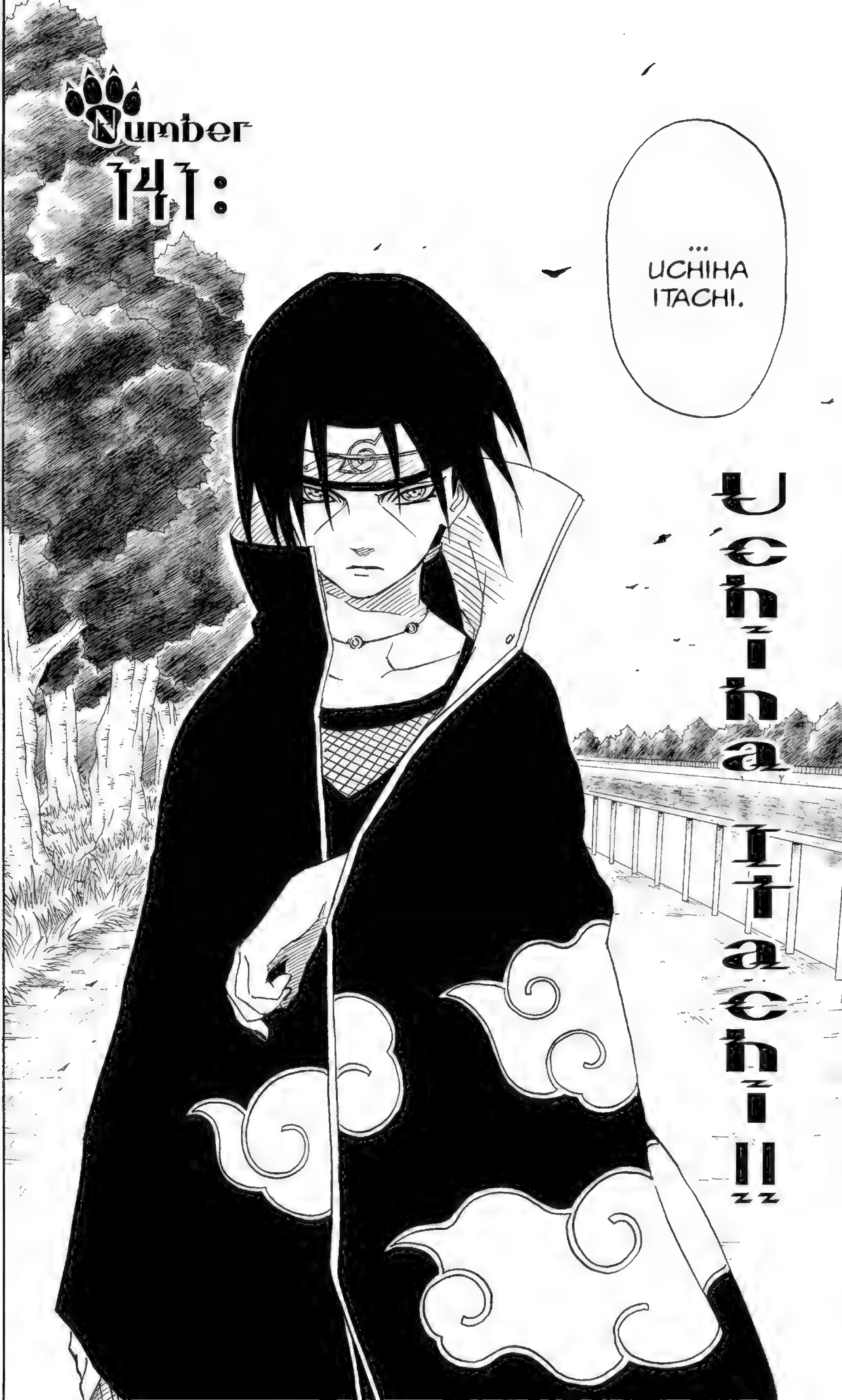
AND THEN, FINALLY, ON THE ACTUAL MORNING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT DAY, "I WISH THAT DREAM WAS A PORTENT"... I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, AS I HEADED TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE. I HAD ALREADY RESIGNED MYSELF TO THE WORST. I MAY NOT HAVE MADE IT... I WANTED TO JUST KNOW THE RESULT AND GET IT OVER WITH AND YET I DIDN'T... WITH THAT CONFLICTED FEELING, I ENTERED THE CONVENIENCE STORE, WHERE A MOUNTAINOUS PILE OF *WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP* LAY STACKED RIGHT NEXT TO THE REGISTER. I DON'T THINK MY HEART EVER POUNDED THAT HARD. I FELT LIKE IT WAS GOING TO JUMP OUT OF MY THROAT.

## Number 141: Uchiha Itachi!!

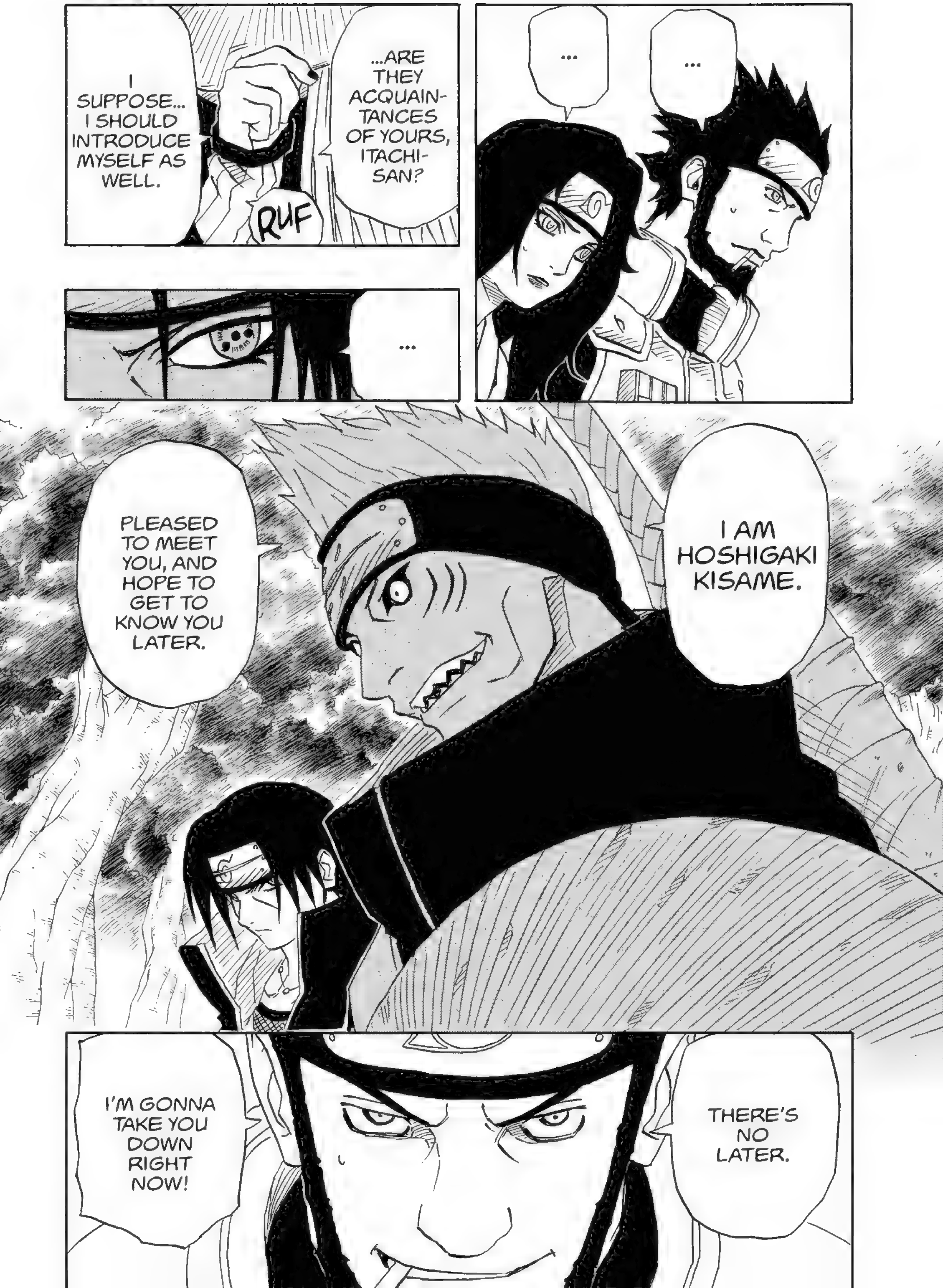

TUG
FLIP
... HUMPH.
THERE'S NO MISTAKE ...
POP
POP

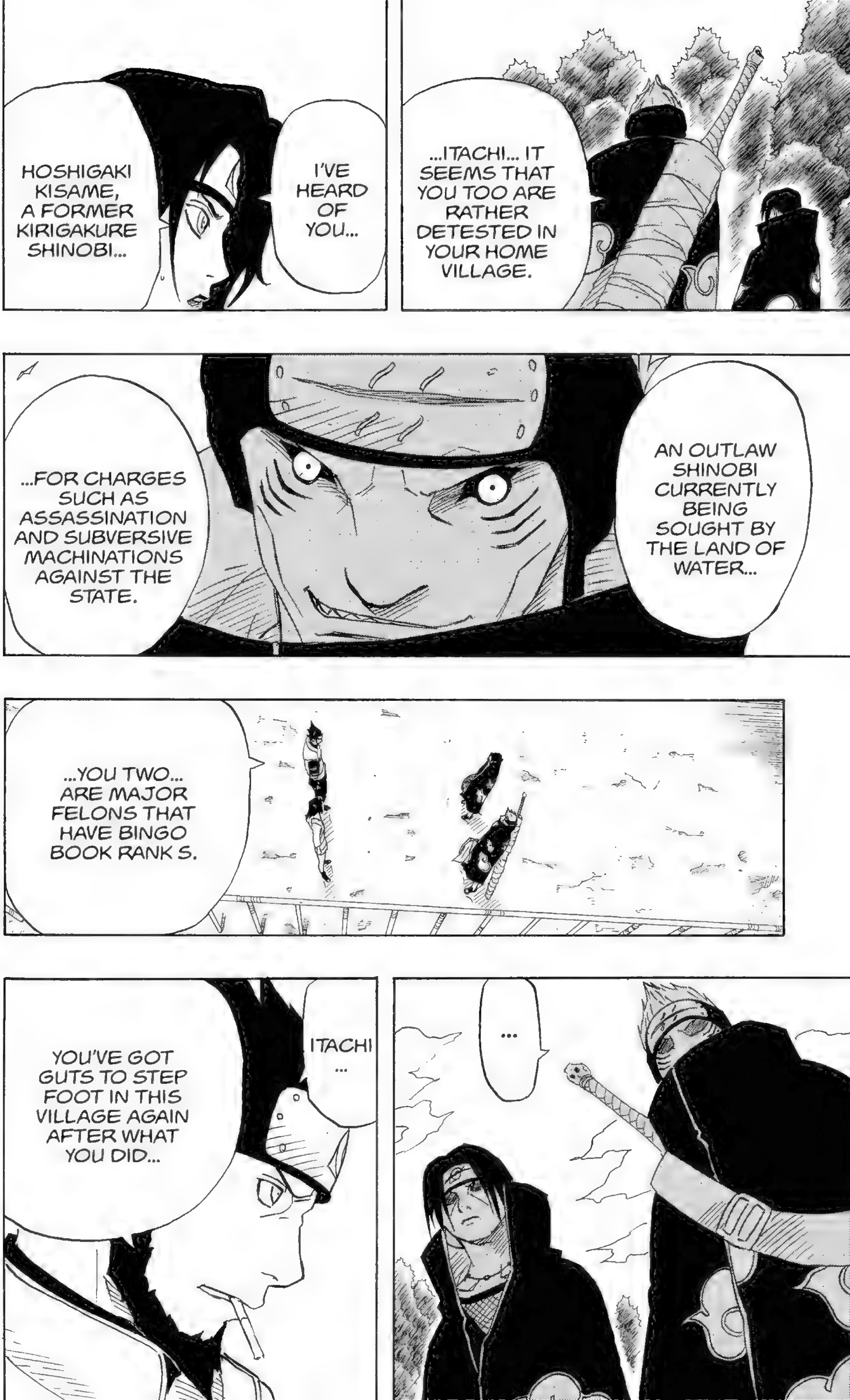
# Number 141:

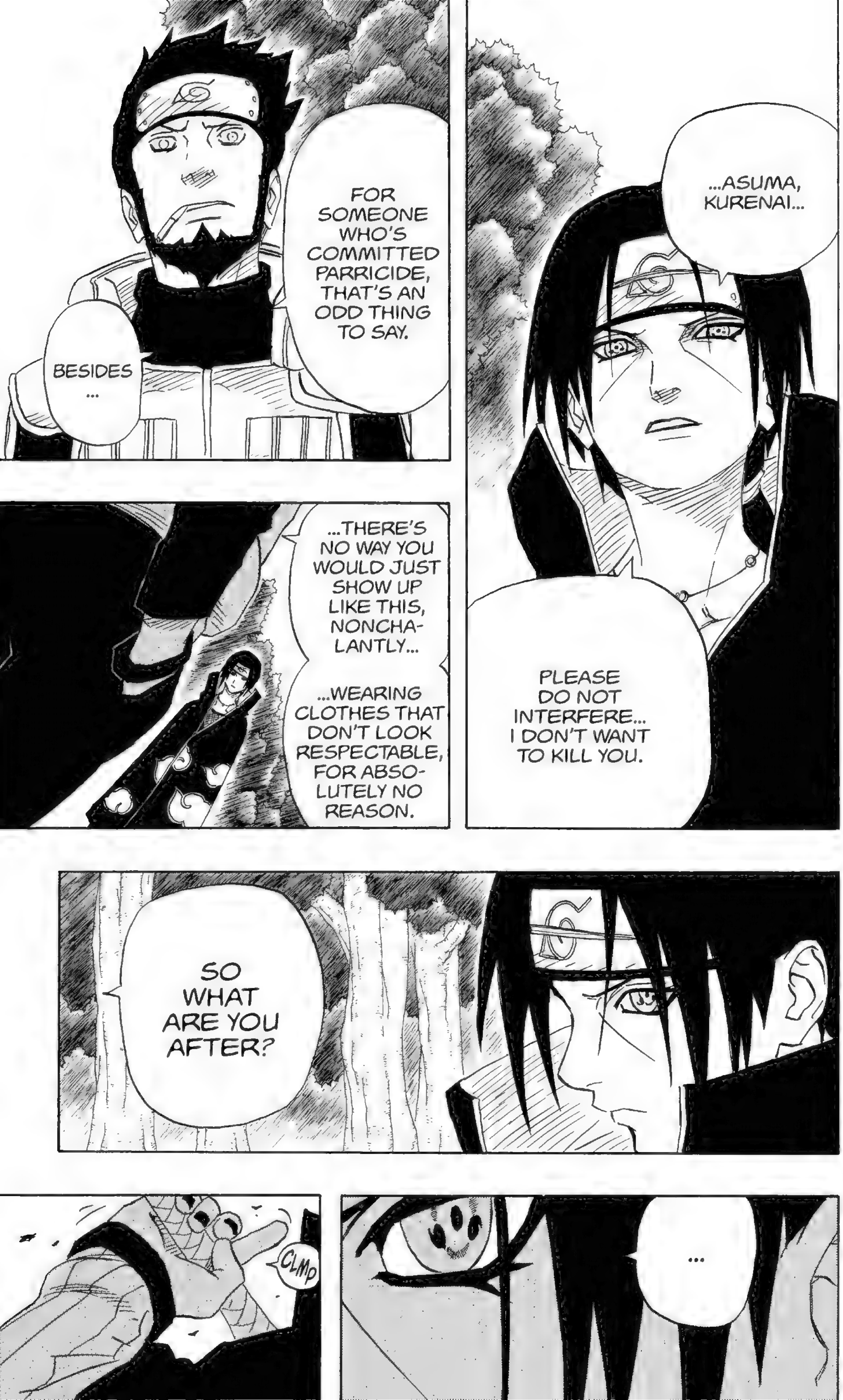
# Uchiha Itachi!!

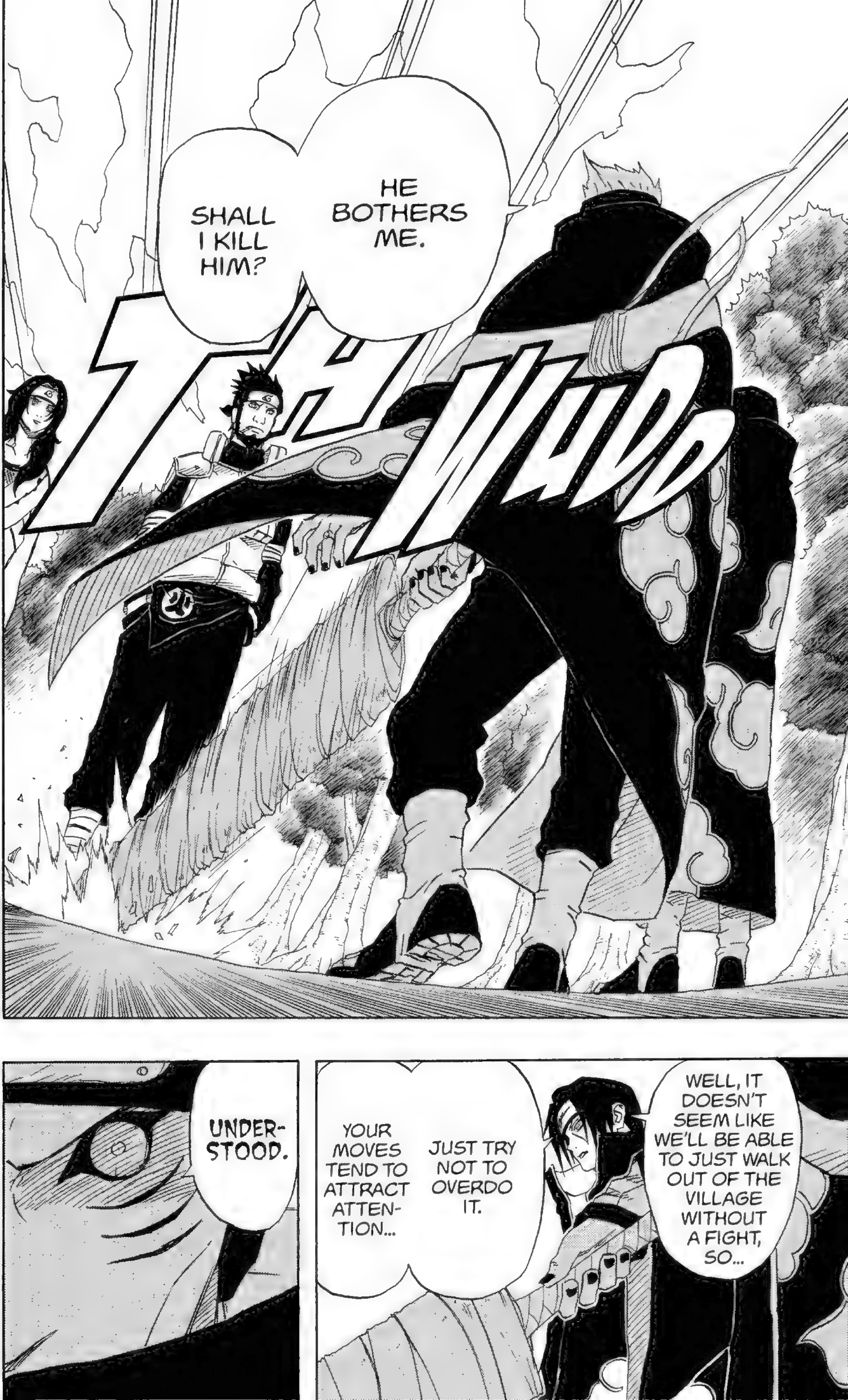

... UCHIHA ITACHI.

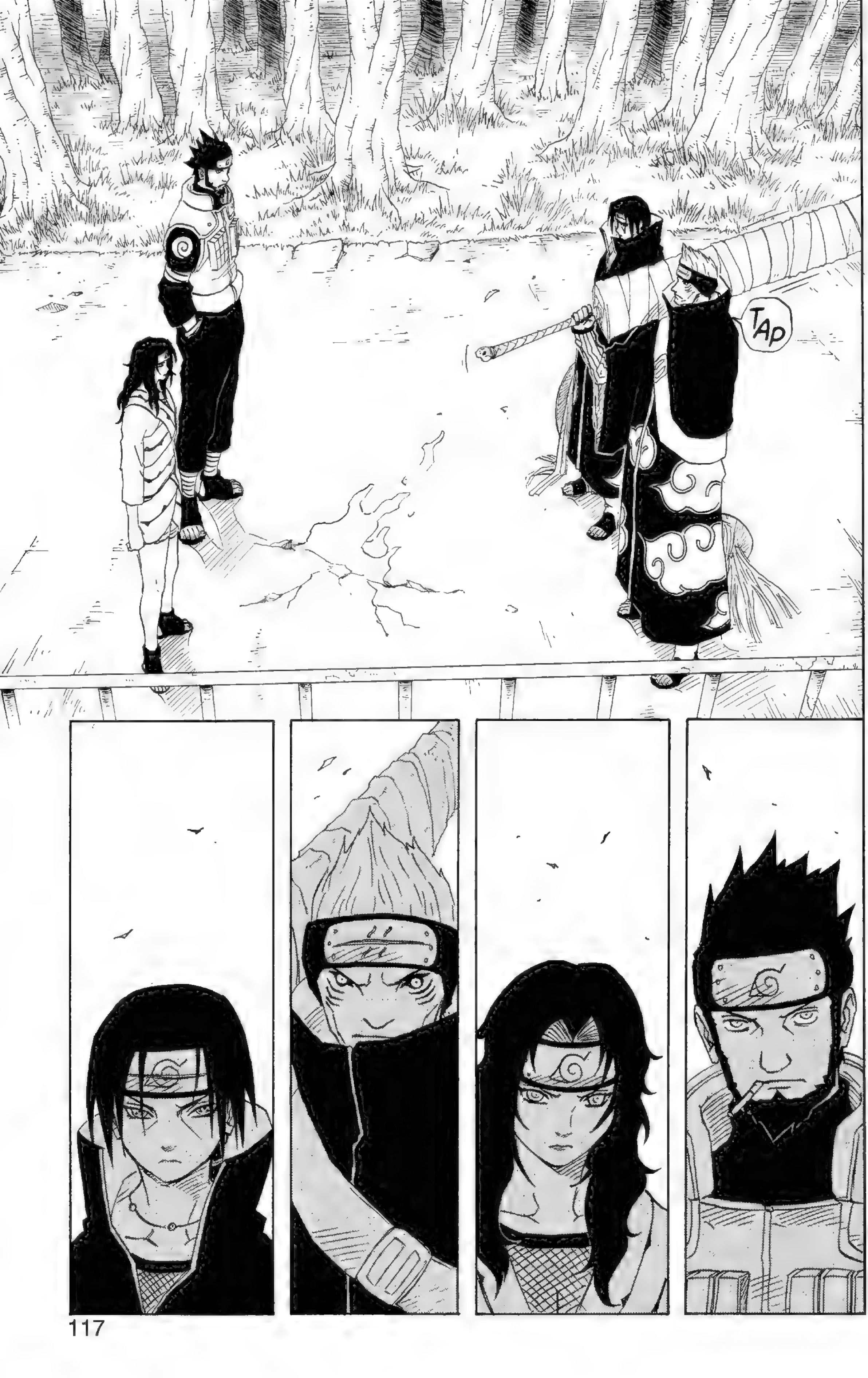
READ THIS WAY

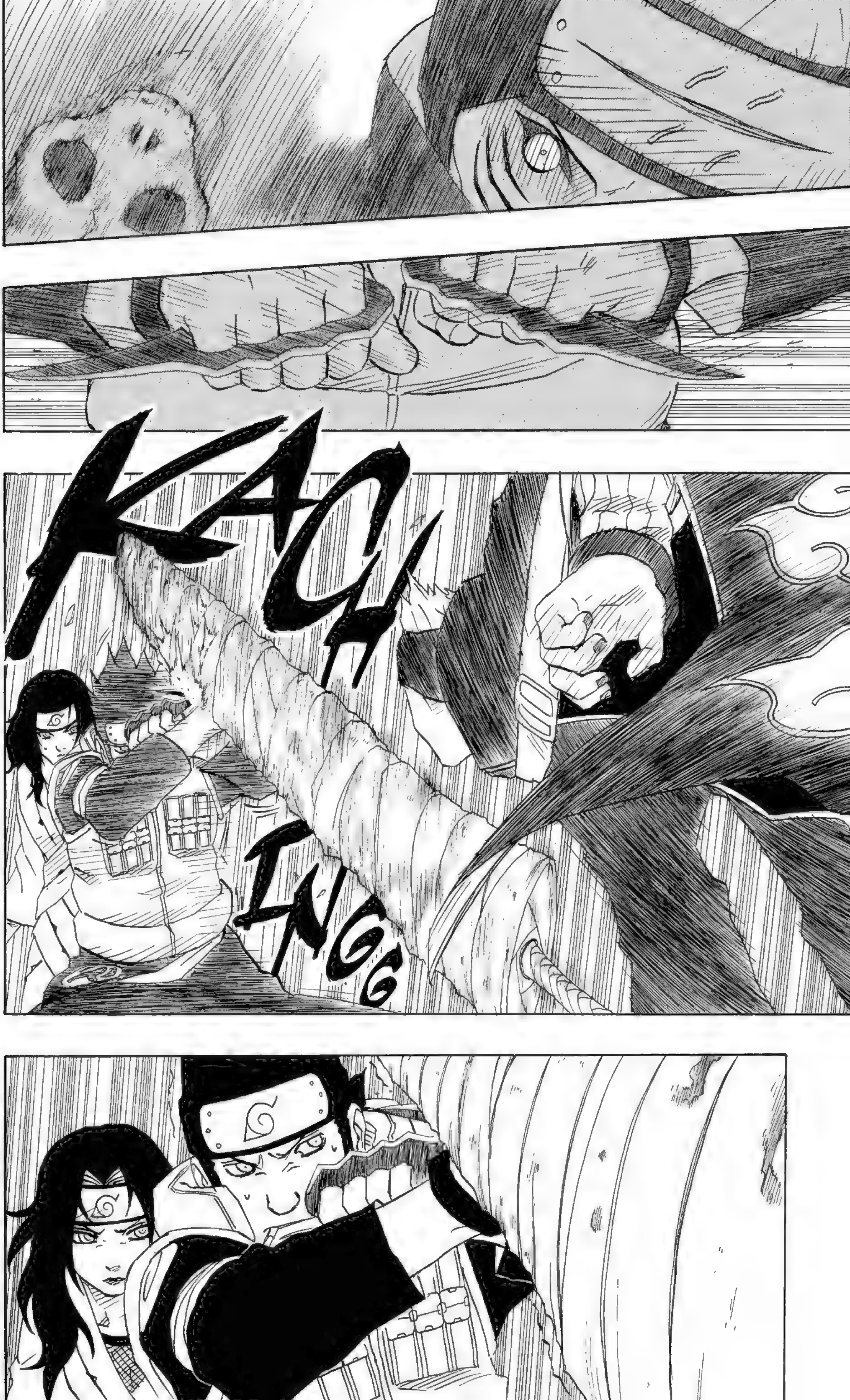

...
...
...ARE THEY ACQUAINTANCES OF YOURS, ITACHI-SAN?
I SUPPOSE... I SHOULD INTRODUCE MYSELF AS WELL.
RUF
...
I AM HOSHIGAKI KISAME.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, AND HOPE TO GET TO KNOW YOU LATER.
THERE'S NO LATER.
I'M GONNA TAKE YOU DOWN RIGHT NOW!

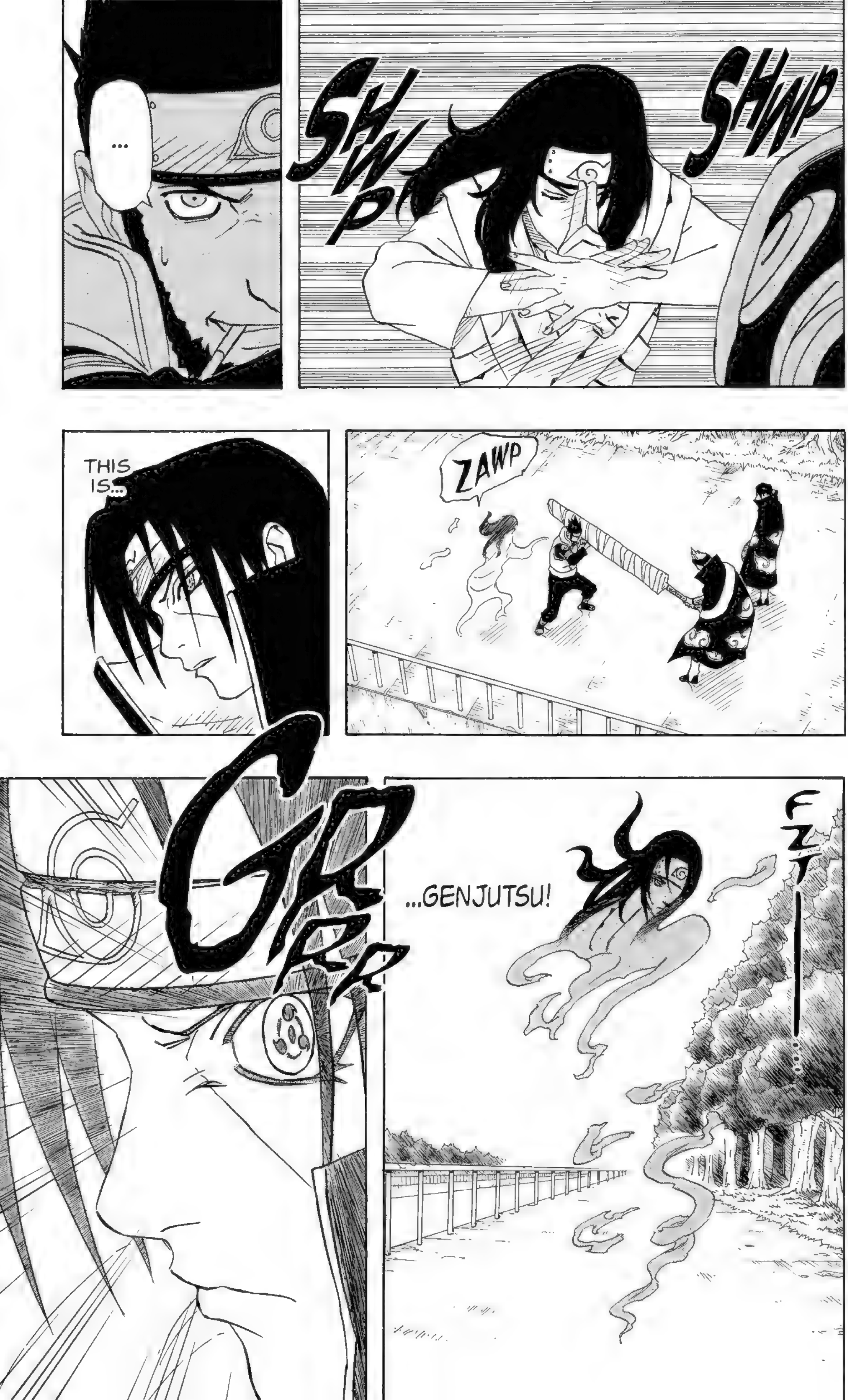

...ITACHI... IT SEEMS THAT YOU TOO ARE RATHER DETESTED IN YOUR HOME VILLAGE.
I'VE HEARD OF YOU...
HOSHIGAKI KISAME, A FORMER KIRIGAKURE SHINOBI...
AN OUTLAW SHINOBI CURRENTLY BEING SOUGHT BY THE LAND OF WATER...
...FOR CHARGES SUCH AS ASSASSINATION AND SUBVERSIVE MACHINATIONS AGAINST THE STATE.
...YOU TWO... ARE MAJOR FELONS THAT HAVE BINGO BOOK RANK S.
...
ITACHI...
YOU'VE GOT GUTS TO STEP FOOT IN THIS VILLAGE AGAIN AFTER WHAT YOU DID...

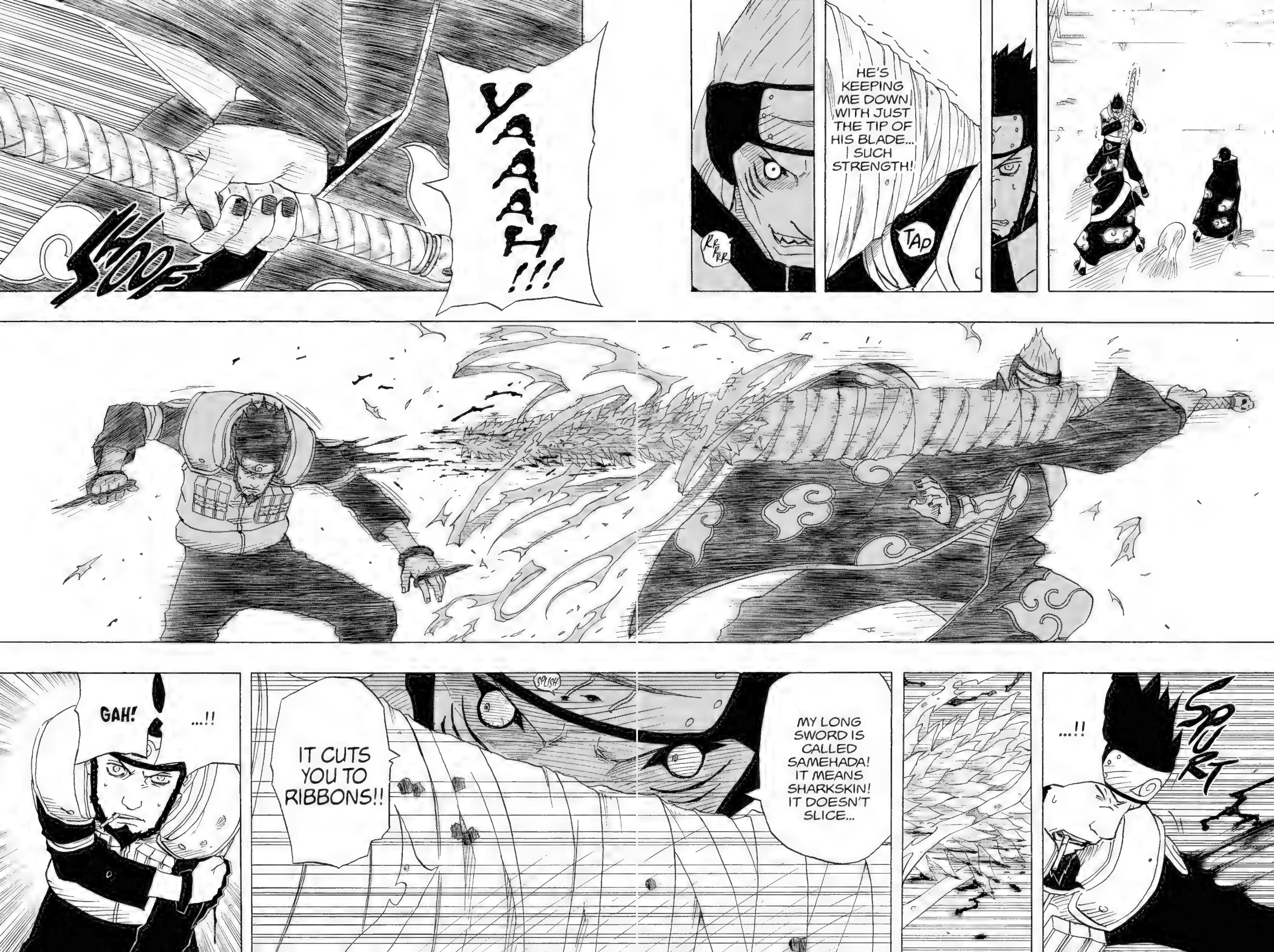

...ASUMA, KURENAI...
PLEASE DO NOT INTERFERE... I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU.
FOR SOMEONE WHO'S COMMITTED PARRICIDE, THAT'S AN ODD THING TO SAY.
BESIDES...
...THERE'S NO WAY YOU WOULD JUST SHOW UP LIKE THIS, NONCHALANTLY...
...WEARING CLOTHES THAT DON'T LOOK RESPECTABLE, FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON.
SO WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?
...
CLMP

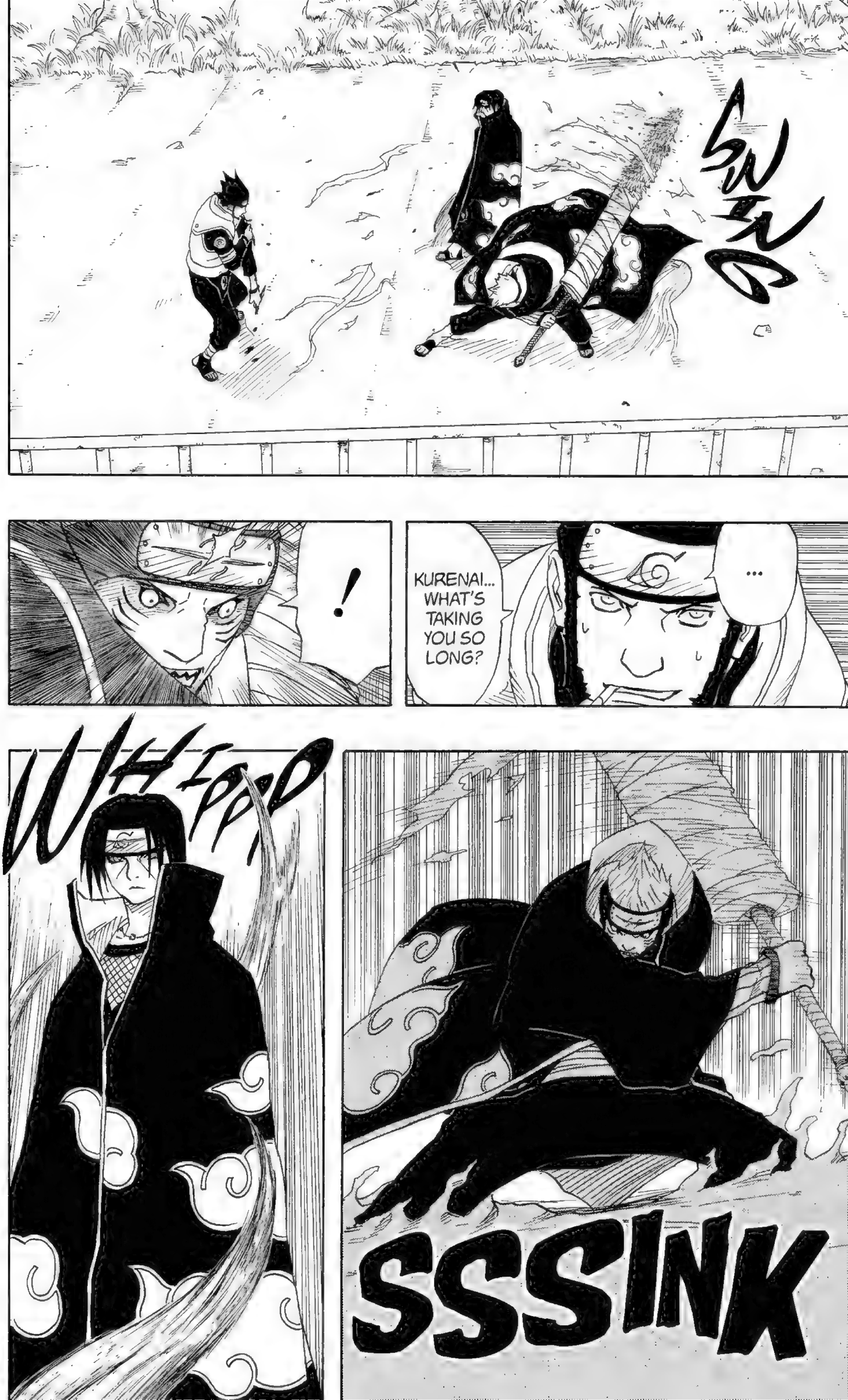

HE BOTHERS ME.
SHALL I KILL HIM?
WELL, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE WE'LL BE ABLE TO JUST WALK OUT OF THE VILLAGE WITHOUT A FIGHT, SO...
JUST TRY NOT TO OVERDO IT.
YOUR MOVES TEND TO ATTRACT ATTENTION...
UNDERSTOOD.


TAP

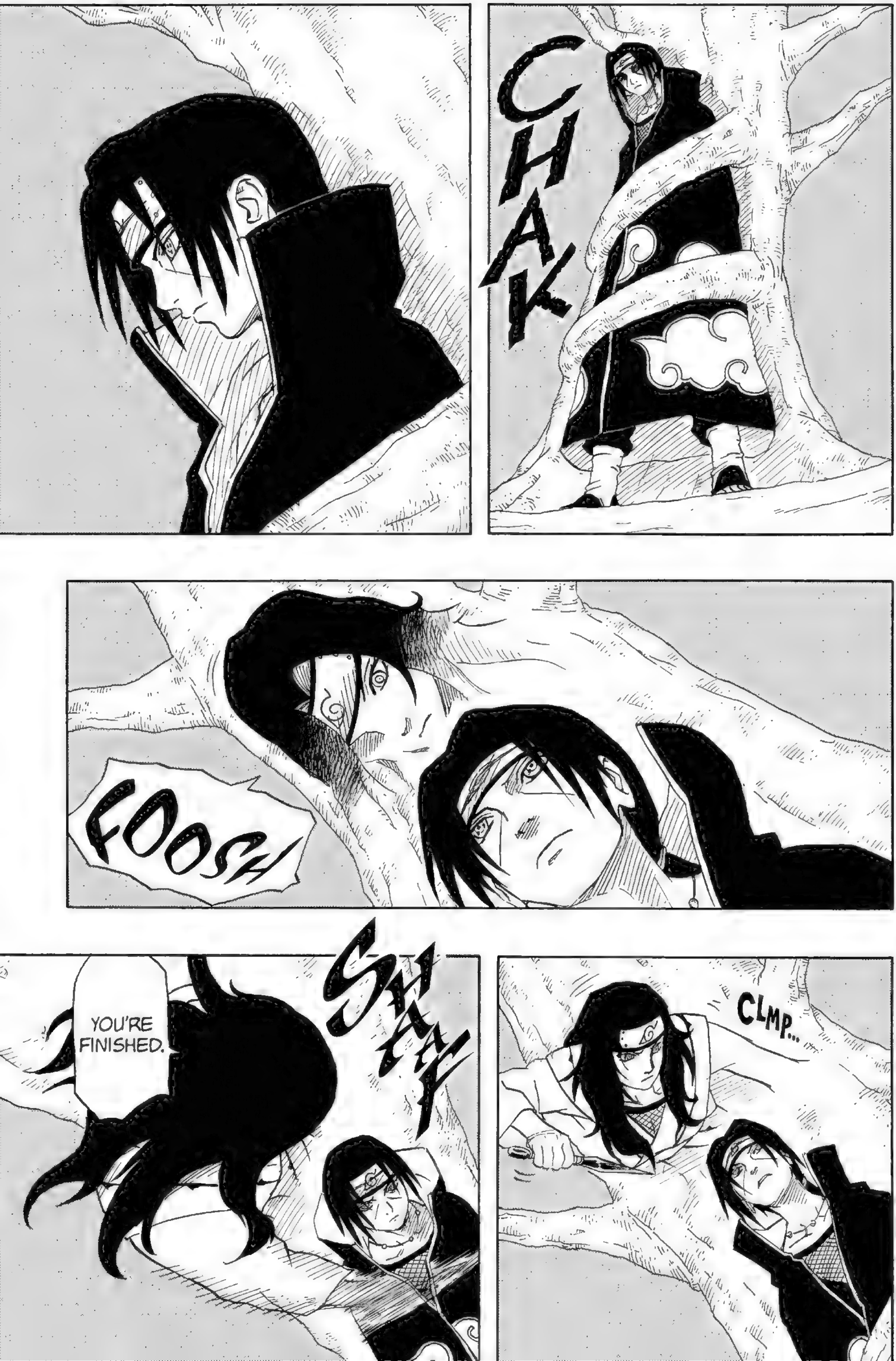

KACHINGG

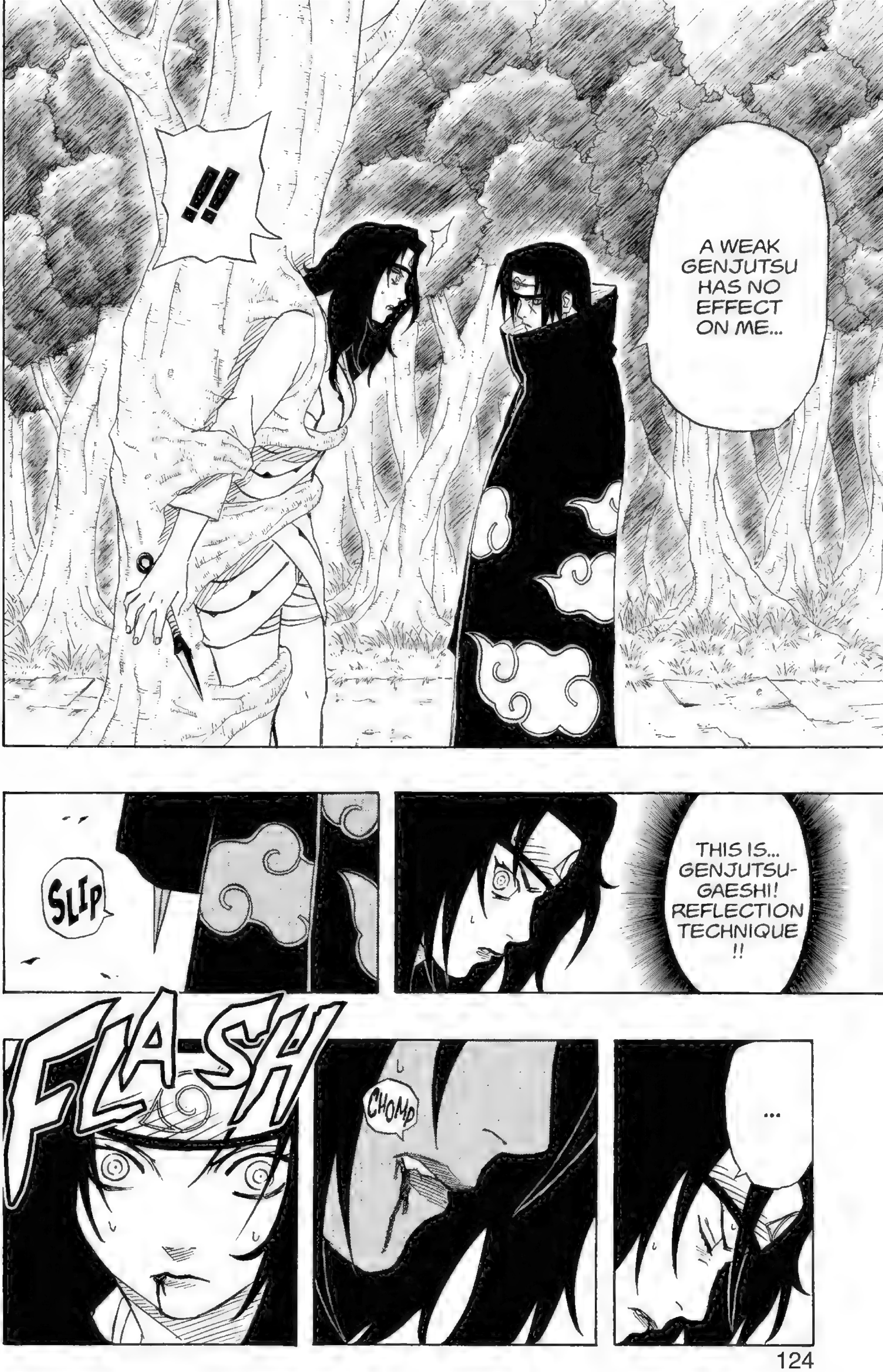

...
SHWP
SHWP
THIS IS...
ZAWP
GRRR
...GENJUTSU!
FZT—...


HE'S KEEPING ME DOWN WITH JUST THE TIP OF HIS BLADE... SUCH STRENGTH!
TAP
RRRR
YAAAH!!!
SHOOF
SPURT
...!!
MY LONG SWORD IS CALLED SAMEHADA! IT MEANS SHARKSKIN! IT DOESN'T SLICE...
SPLISH
IT CUTS YOU TO RIBBONS!!
...!!
GAH!

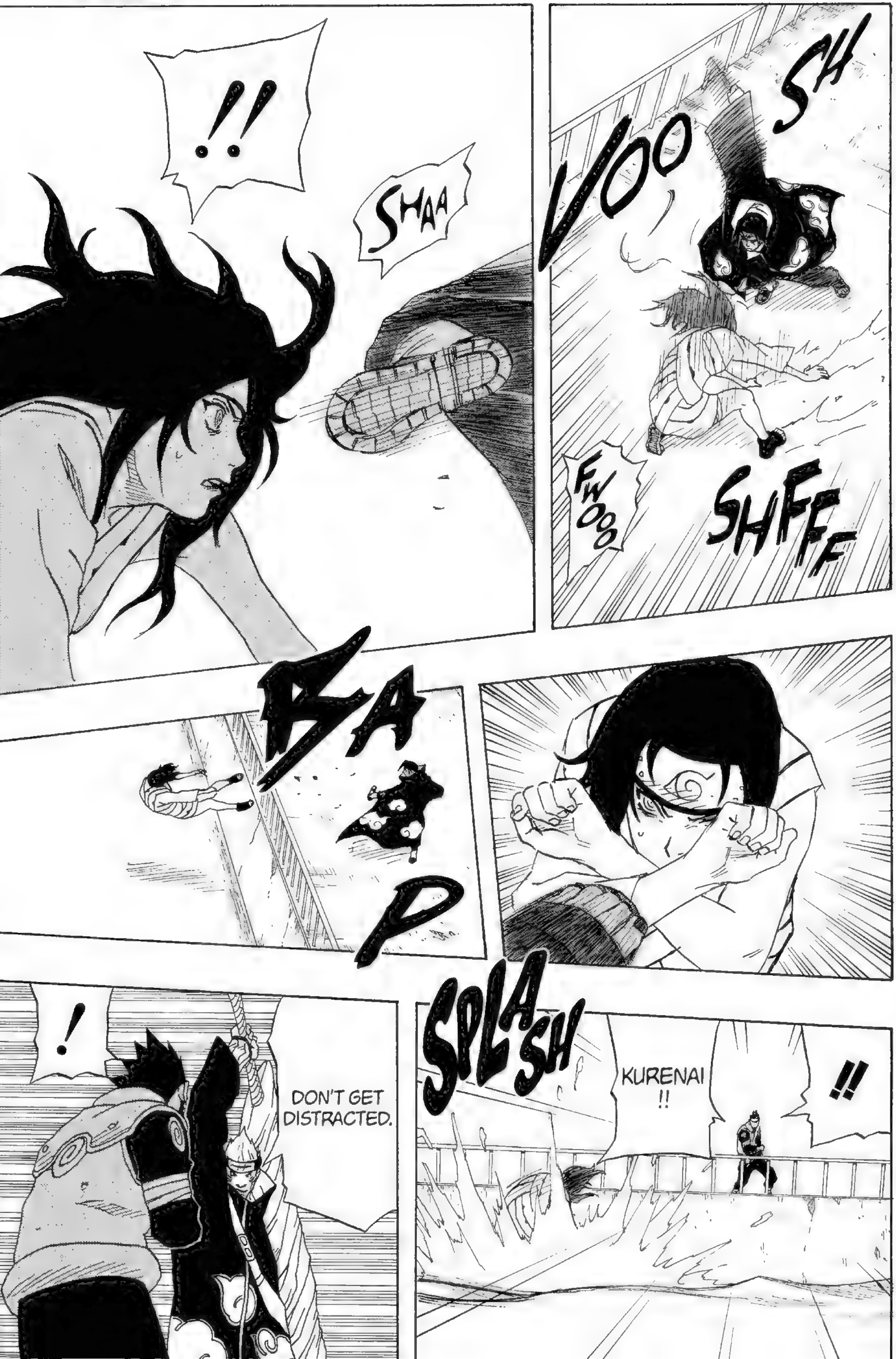

SWING
...
KURENAI... WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?
!
SSSINK
WHIPPP

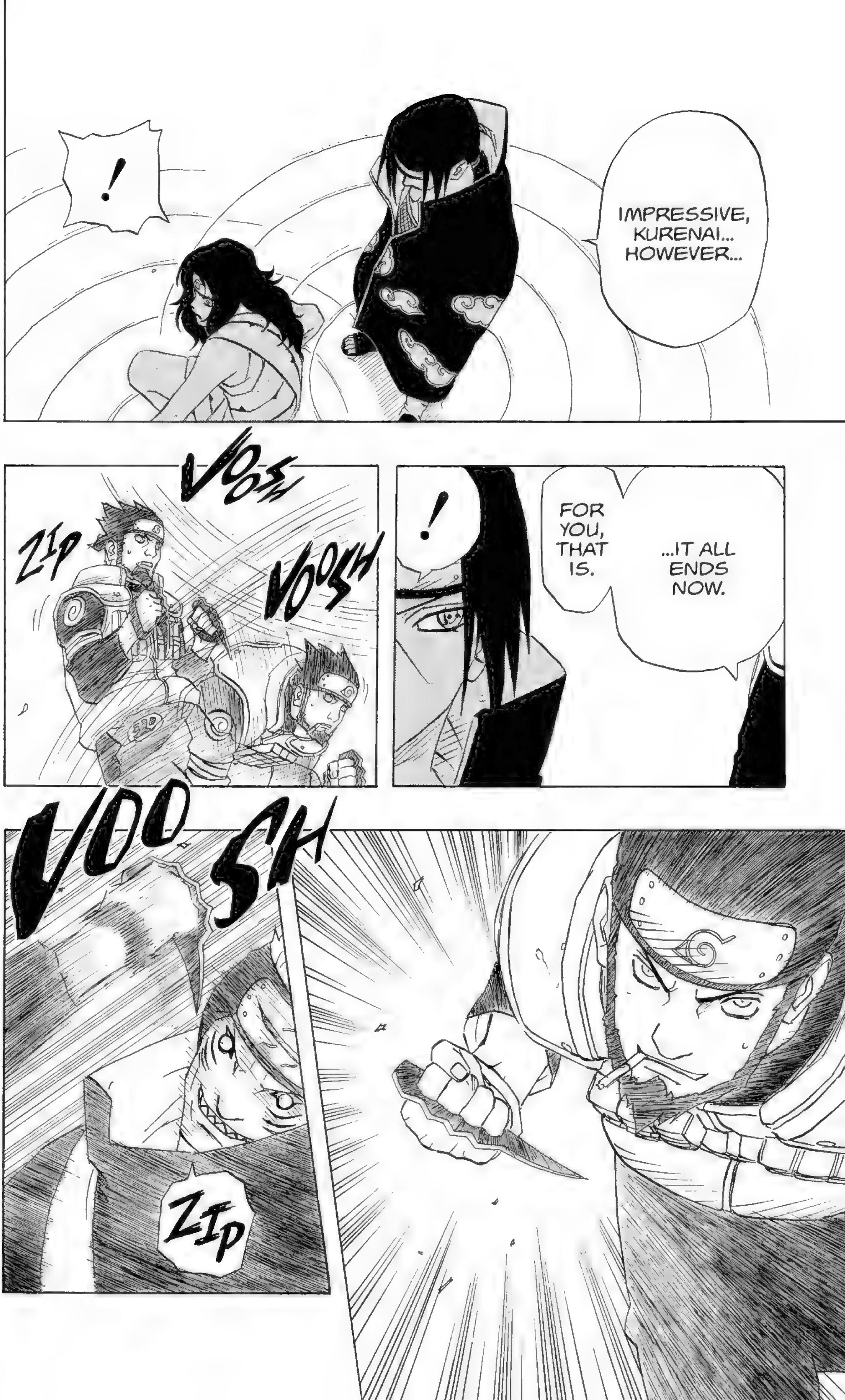
READ THIS WAY


CHAK
FOOSH
CLMP...
SHAK
YOU'RE FINISHED.

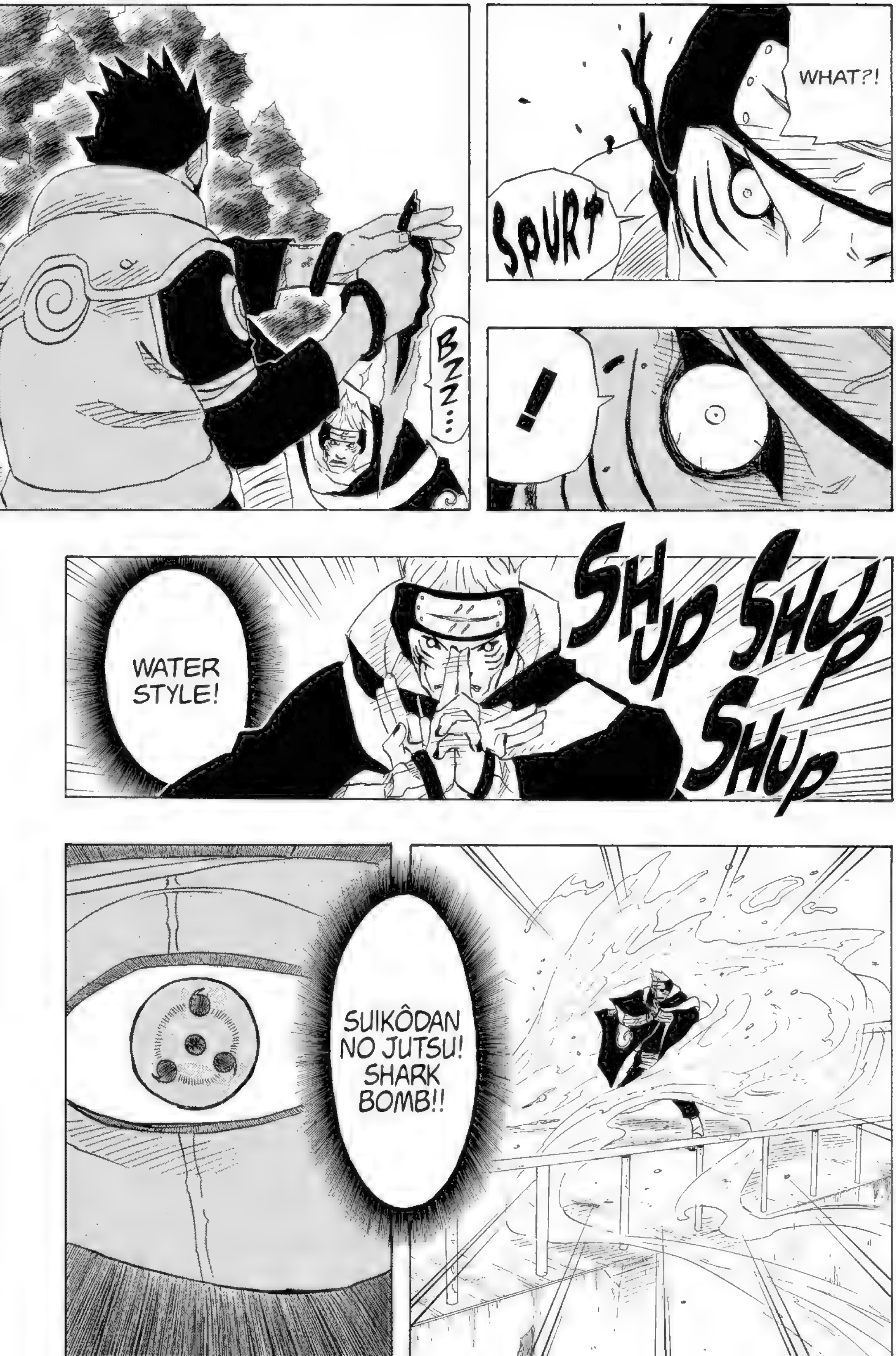

A WEAK GENJUTSU HAS NO EFFECT ON ME...
!!
THIS IS... GENJUTSU-GAESHI! REFLECTION TECHNIQUE !!
SLIP
...
CHOMP
FLA-SH

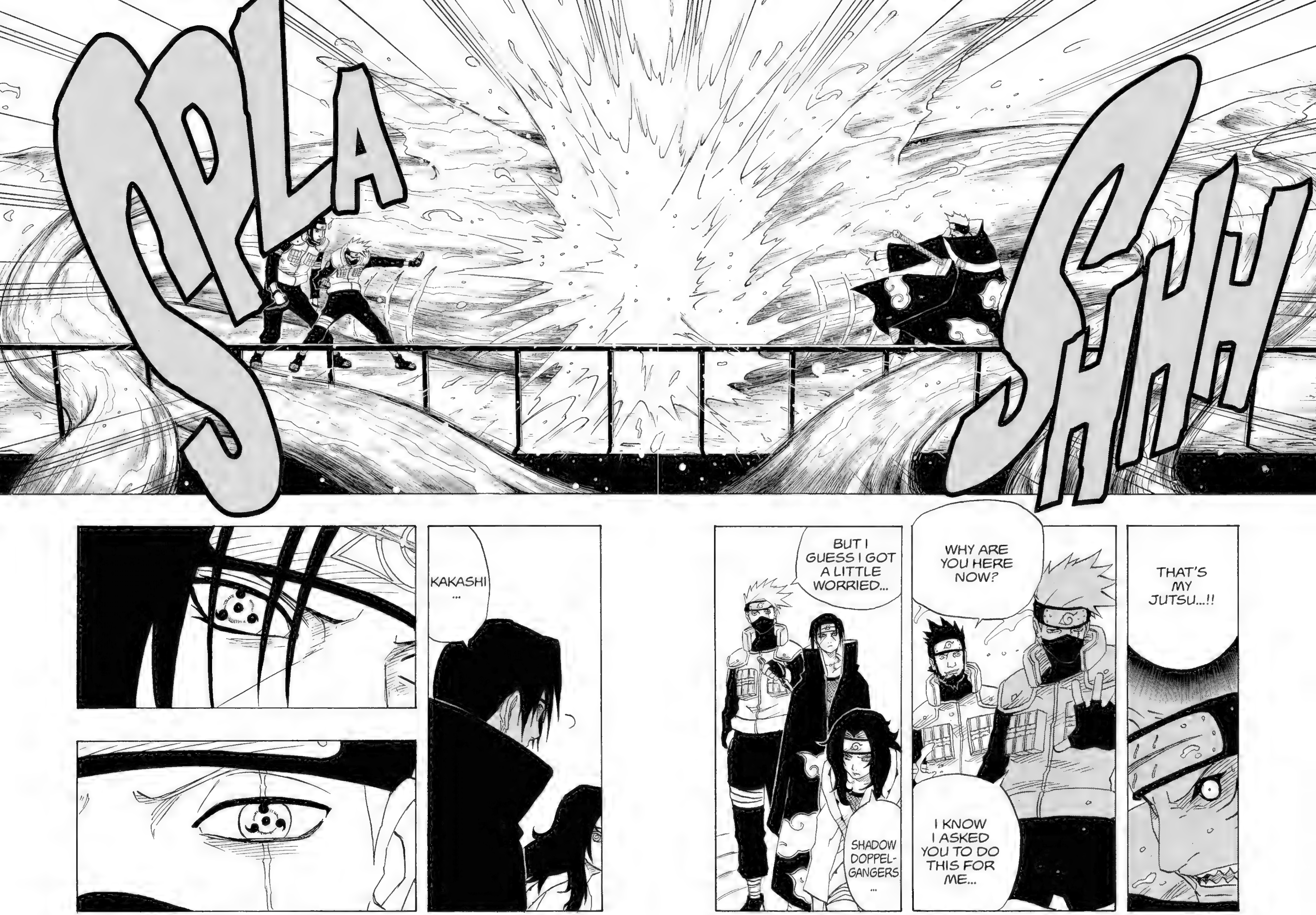
READ THIS WAY

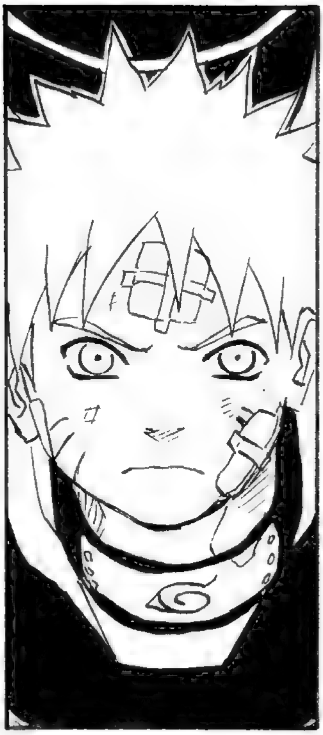

VOOOSH
FWOOO
SHFFFF
!!
SHAA
BAP
!!
KURENAI !!
SPLASH
!
DON'T GET DISTRACTED.


IMPRESSIVE, KURENAI... HOWEVER...
!
...IT ALL ENDS NOW.
FOR YOU, THAT IS.
!
VOOSH
VOOSH
ZIP
VOOSH
ZIP

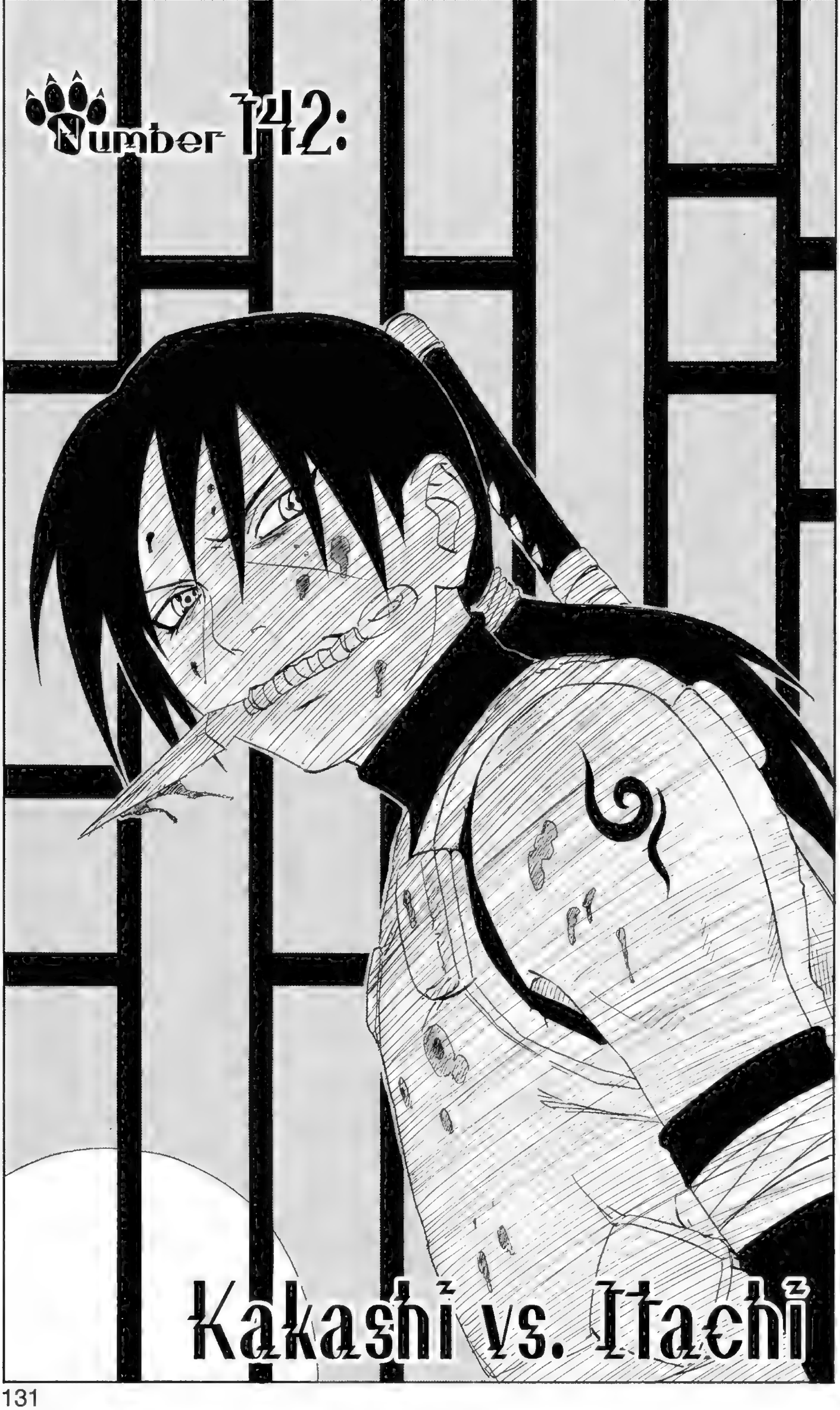
READ THIS WAY


WHAT?!
SPURT
!
BZZ...
SHUP SHUP SHUP
WATER STYLE!
SUIKÔDAN NO JUTSU! SHARK BOMB!!

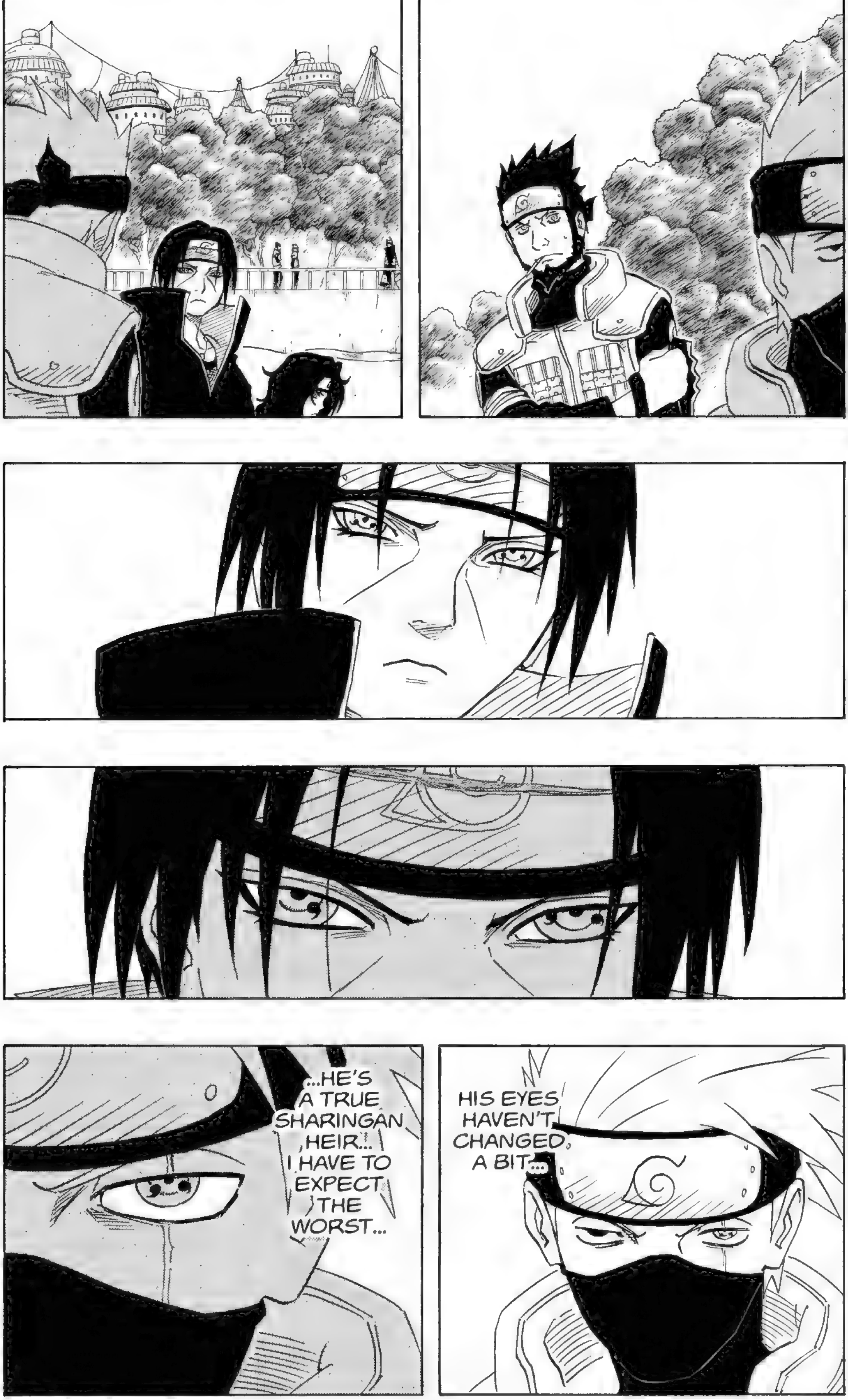

SPLA
SHHH
THAT'S MY JUTSU...!!
WHY ARE YOU HERE NOW?
I KNOW I ASKED YOU TO DO THIS FOR ME...
BUT I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE WORRIED...
SHADOW DOPPELGANGERS...
KAKASHI...

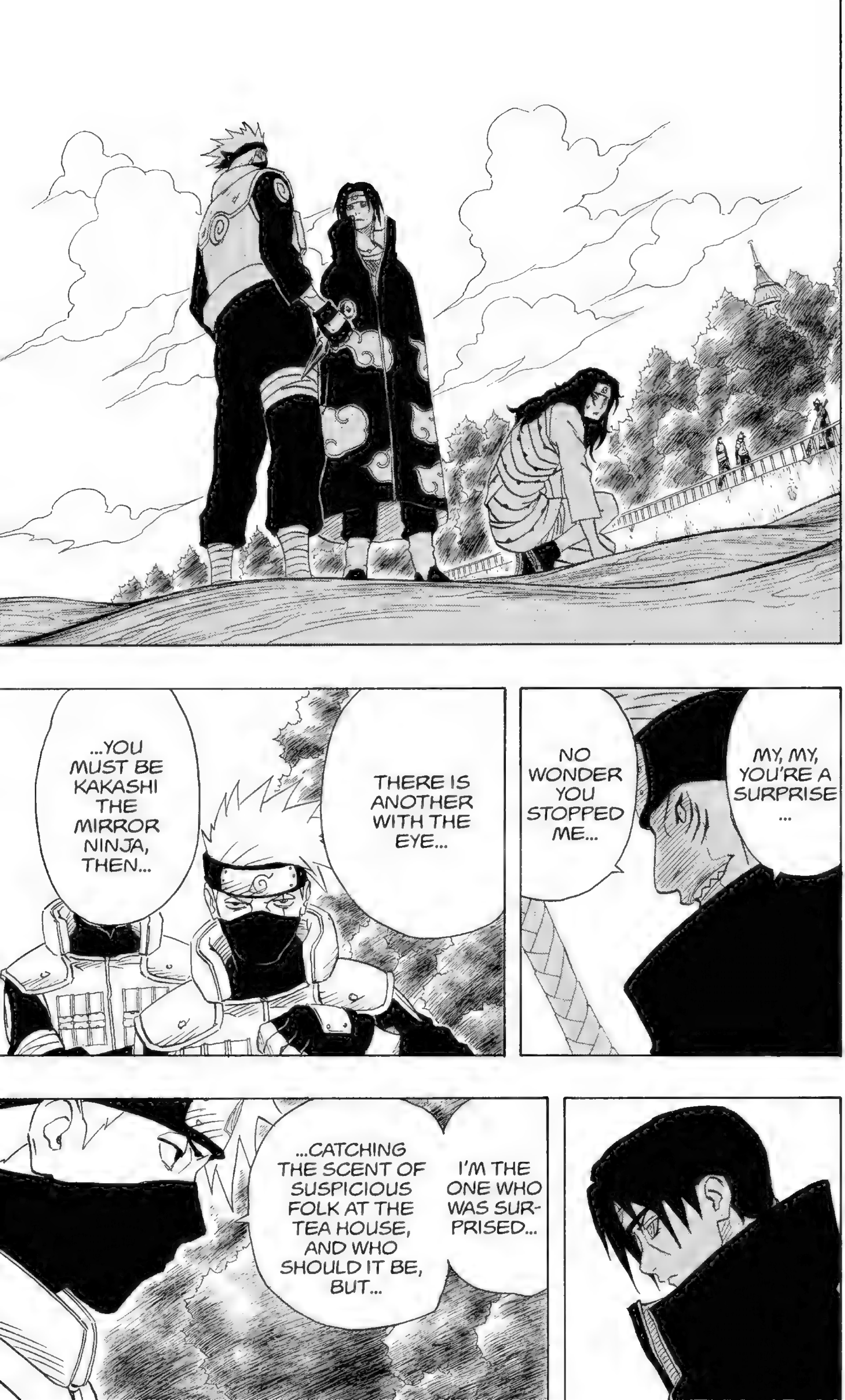


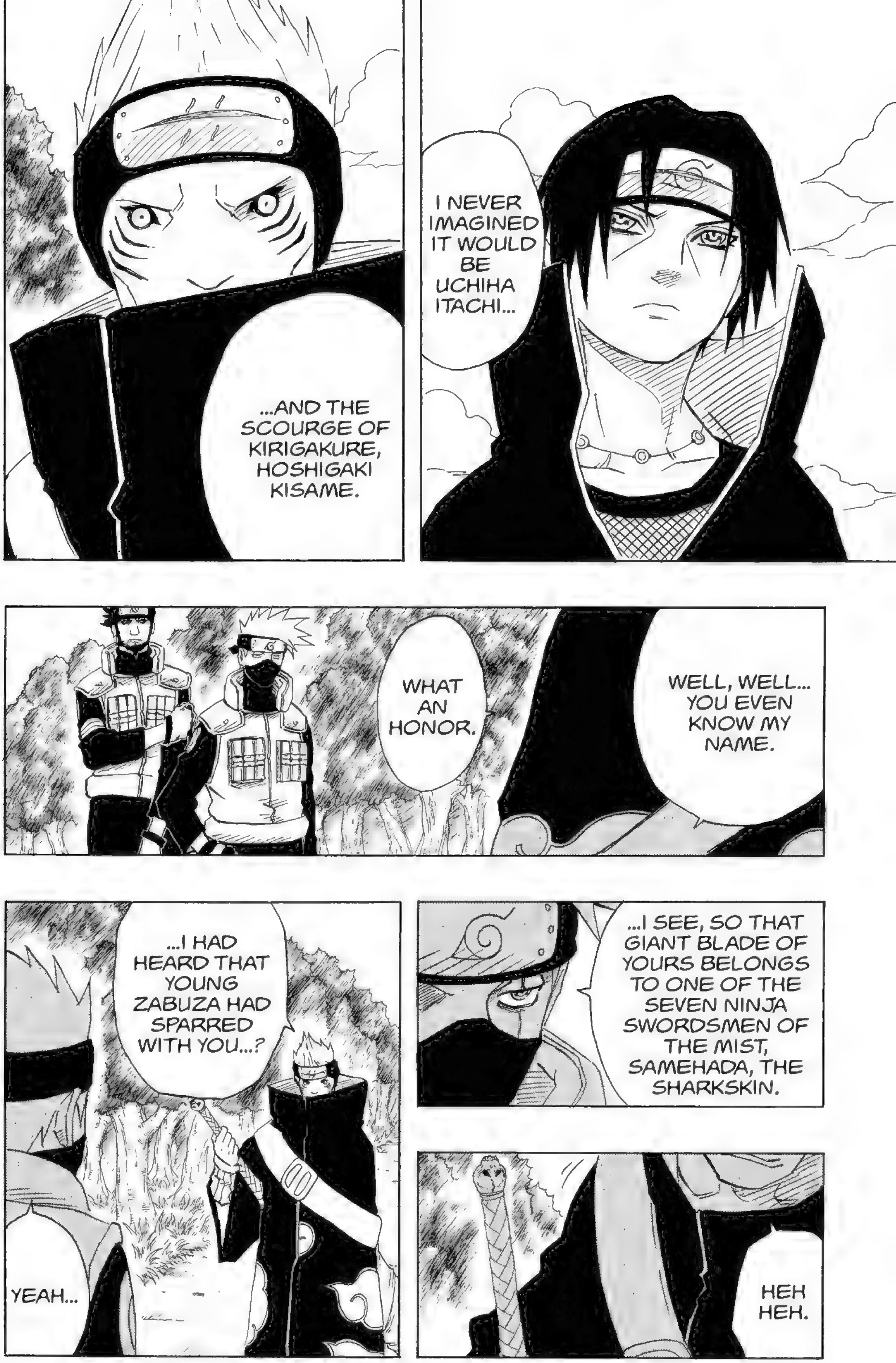
## Number 142:



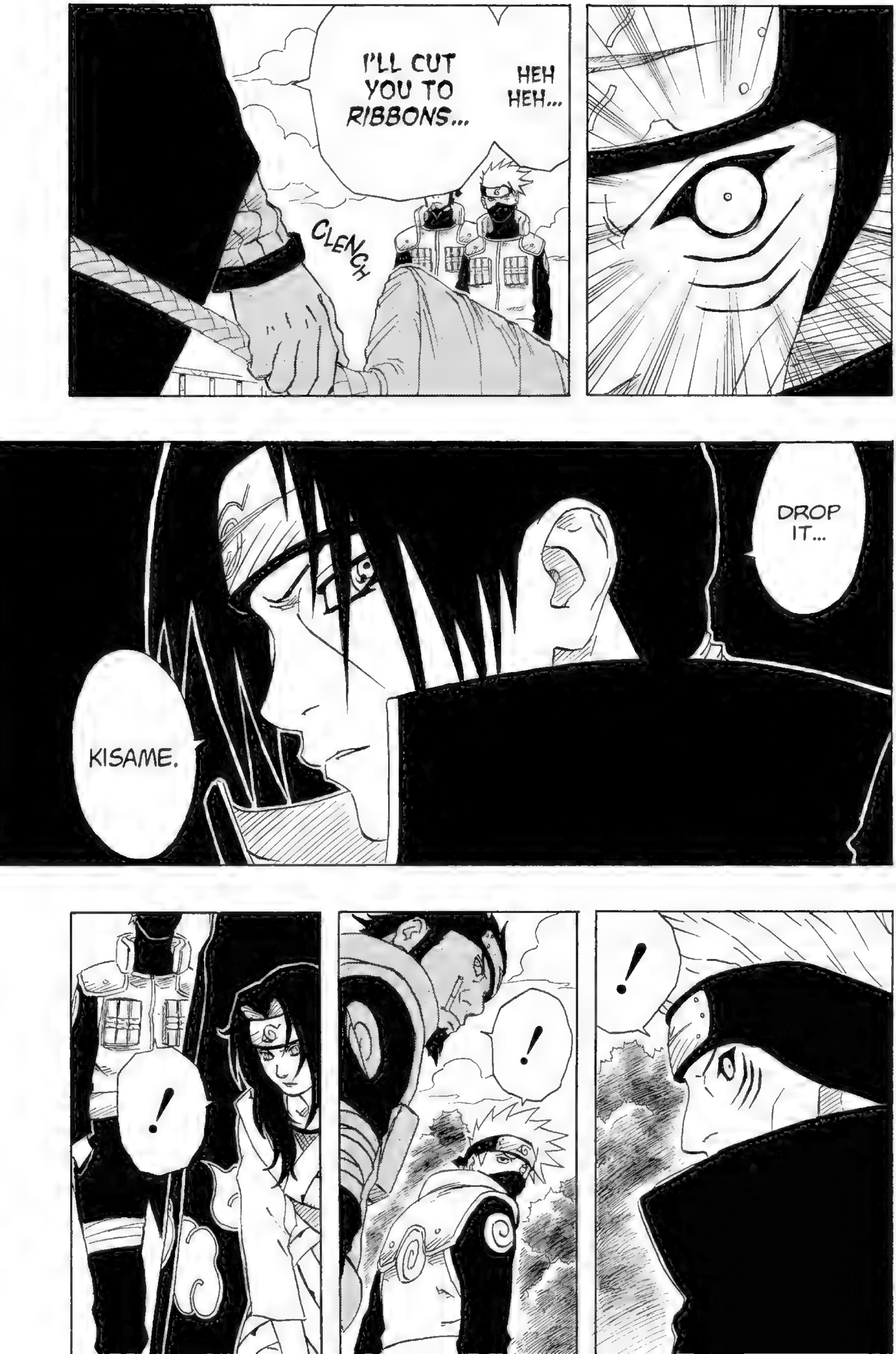
# Kakashi vs. Itachi

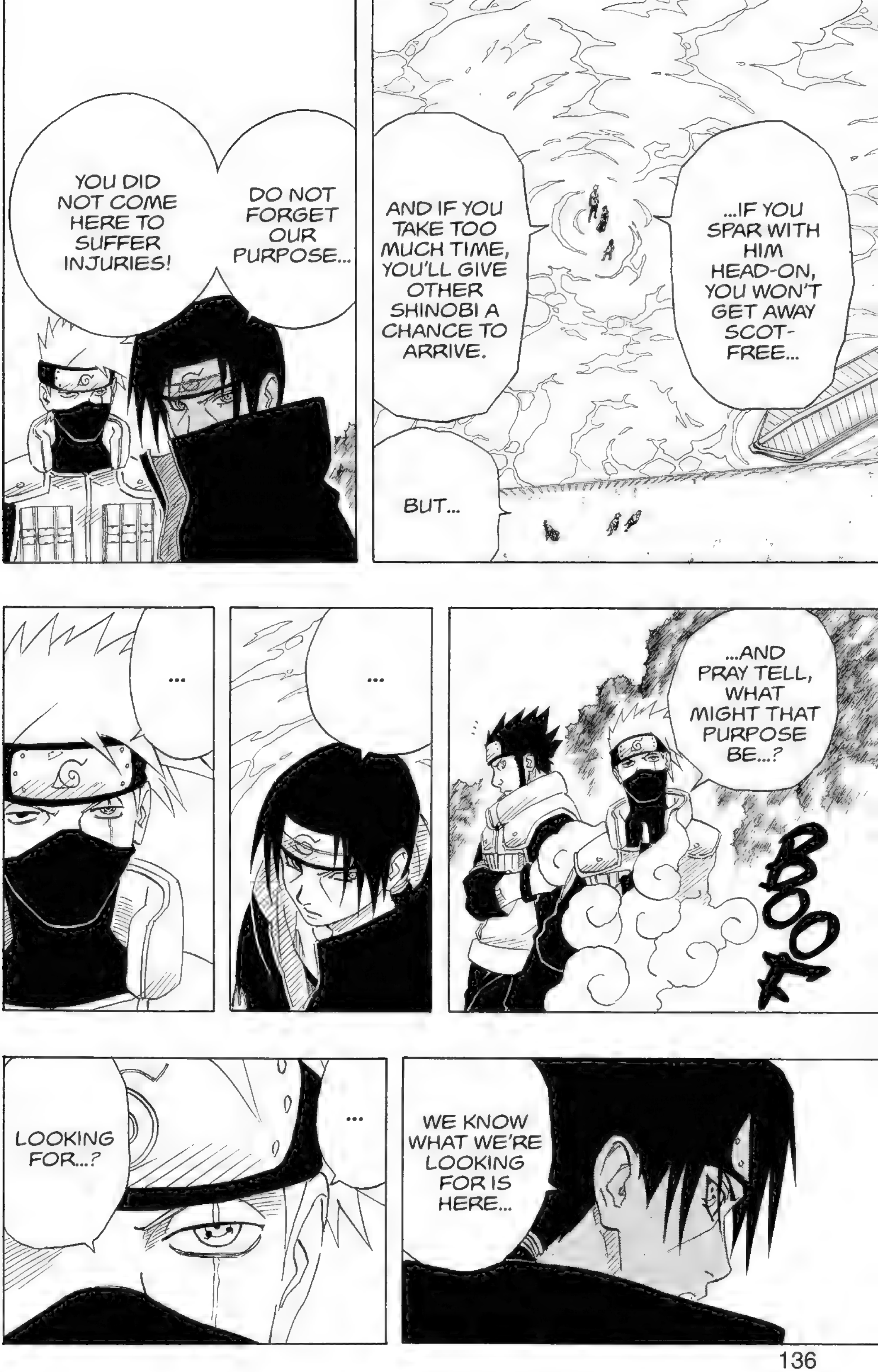

HIS EYES HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT...
...HE'S A TRUE SHARINGAN HEIR... I HAVE TO EXPECT THE WORST...

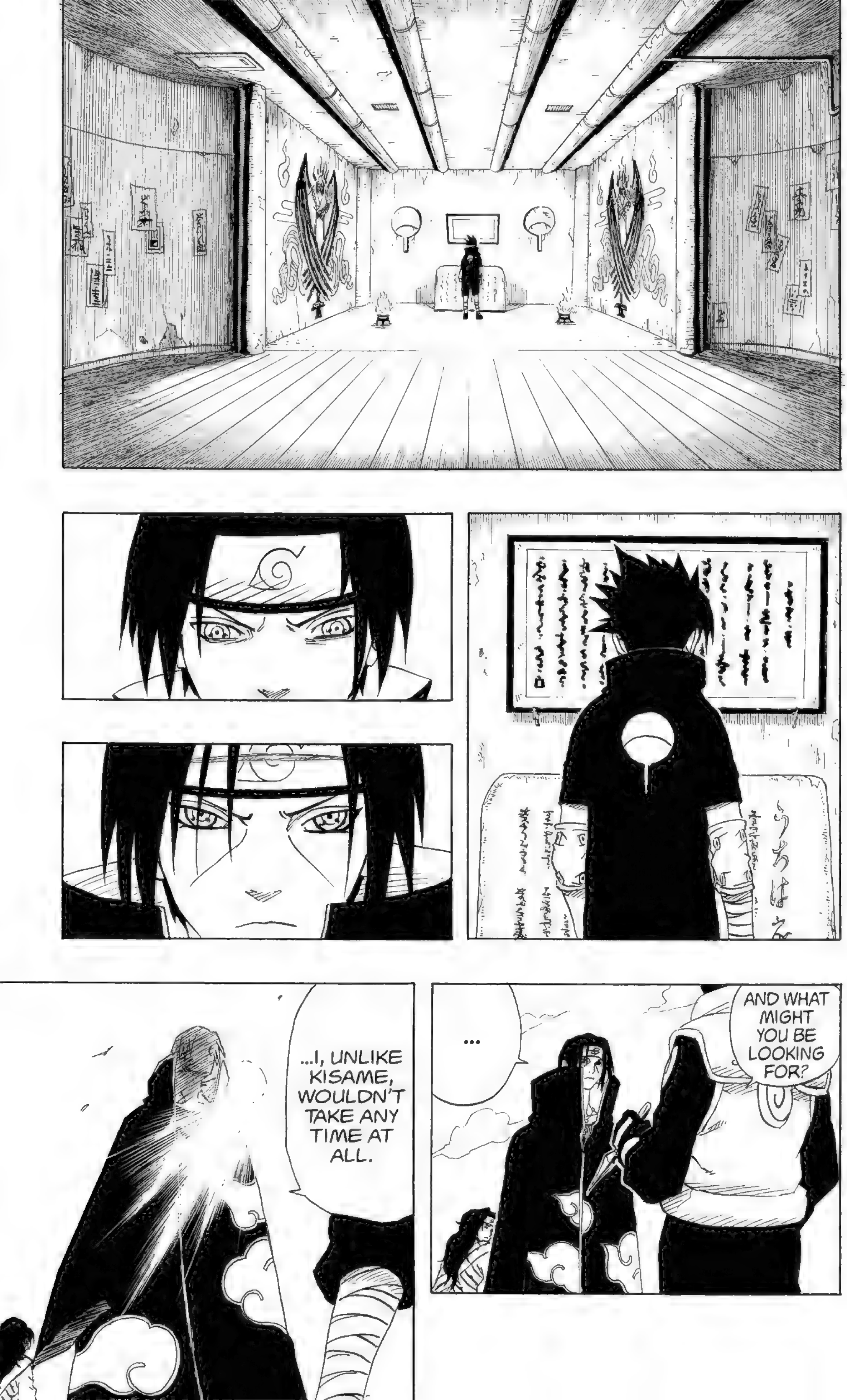

MY, MY, YOU'RE A SURPRISE...
NO WONDER YOU STOPPED ME...
THERE IS ANOTHER WITH THE EYE...
...YOU MUST BE KAKASHI THE MIRROR NINJA, THEN...
I'M THE ONE WHO WAS SURPRISED...
...CATCHING THE SCENT OF SUSPICIOUS FOLK AT THE TEA HOUSE, AND WHO SHOULD IT BE, BUT...

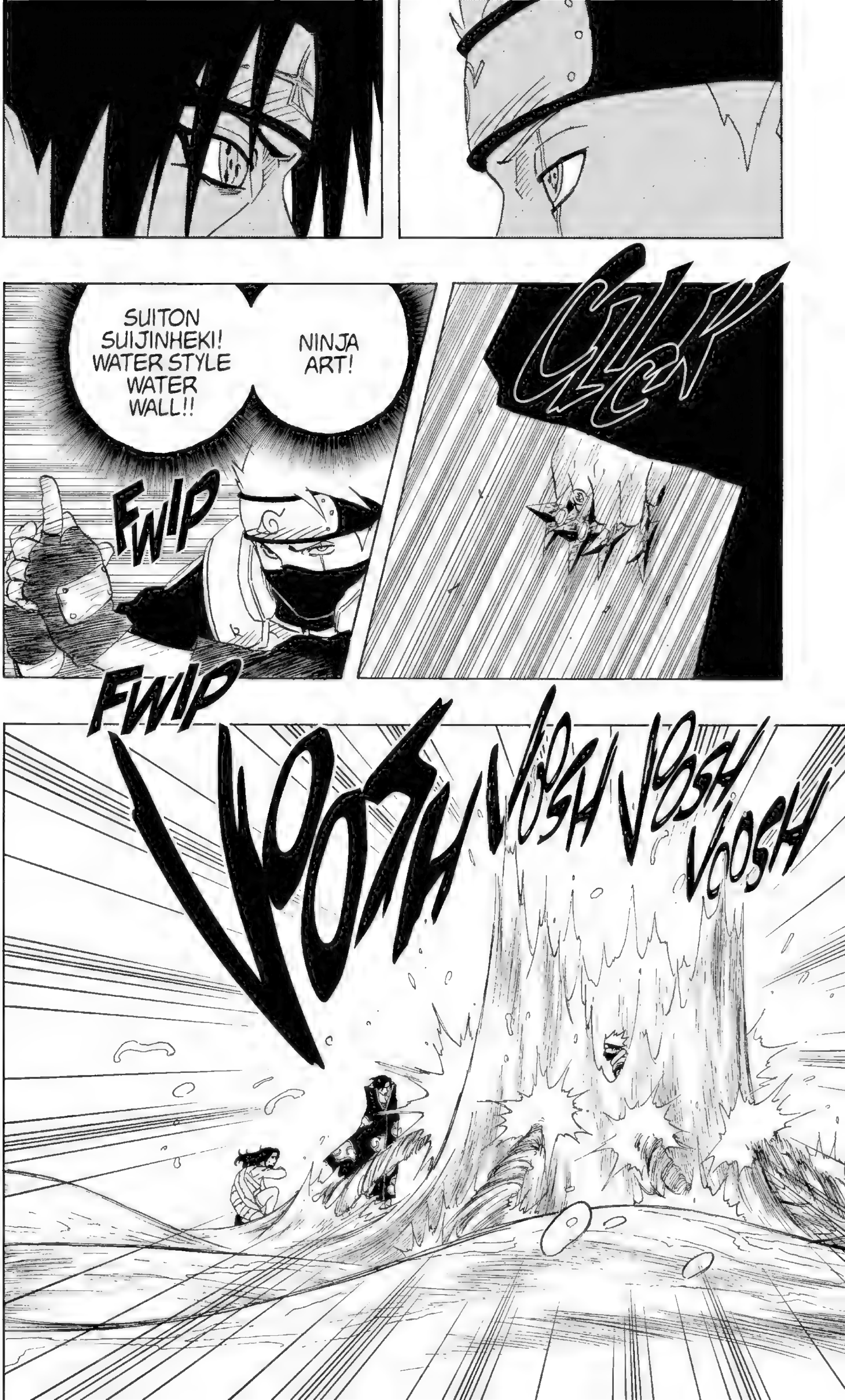

I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BE UCHIHA ITACHI...
...AND THE SCOURGE OF KIRIGAKURE, HOSHIGAKI KISAME.
WELL, WELL... YOU EVEN KNOW MY NAME.
WHAT AN HONOR.
...I SEE, SO THAT GIANT BLADE OF YOURS BELONGS TO ONE OF THE SEVEN NINJA SWORDSMEN OF THE MIST, SAMEHADA, THE SHARKSKIN.
HEH HEH.
...I HAD HEARD THAT YOUNG ZABUZA HAD SPARRED WITH YOU...?
YEAH...

READ THIS WAY

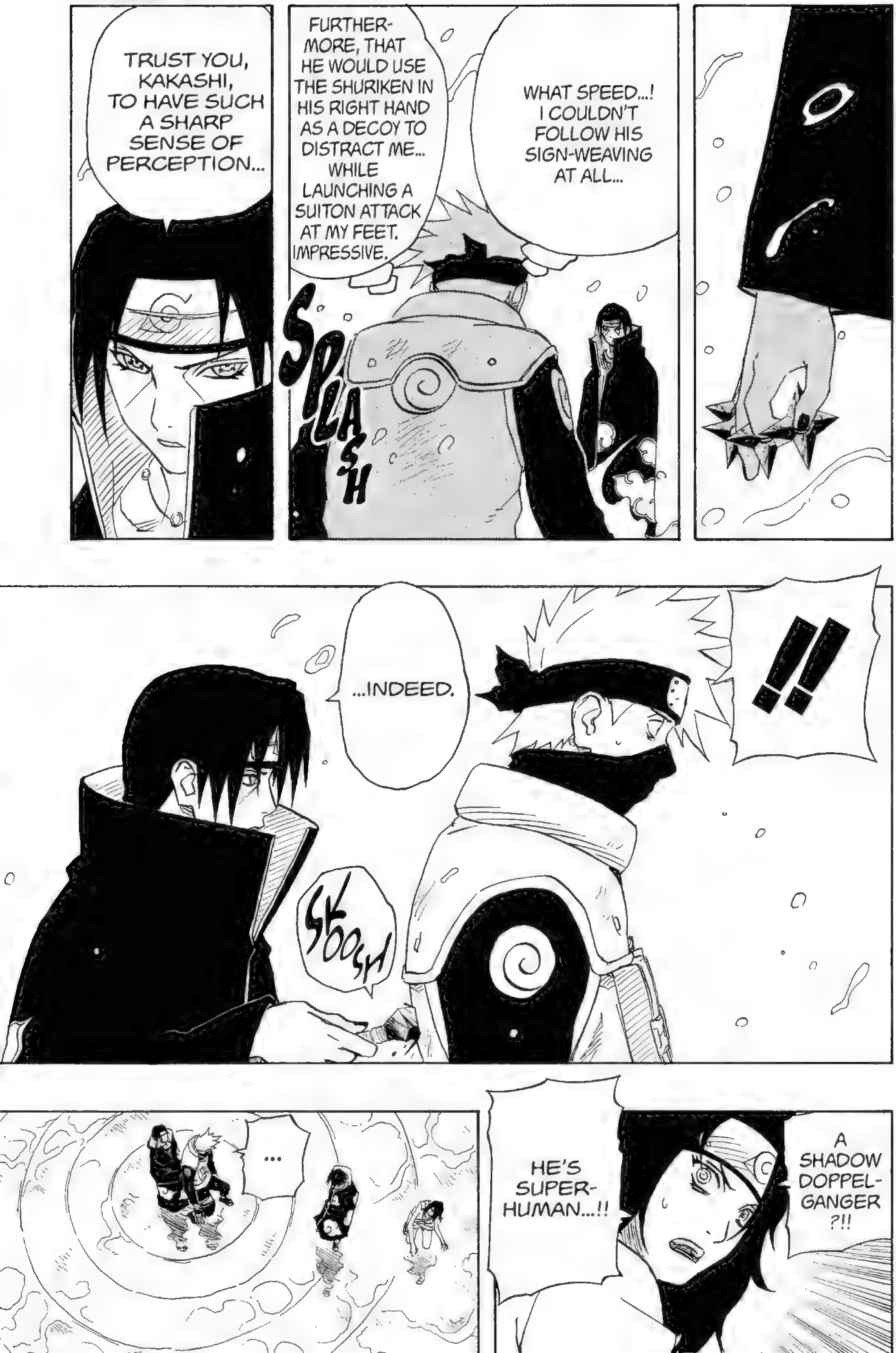

HEH HEH...
I'LL CUT YOU TO RIBBONS...
CLENCH
DROP IT...
KISAME.
!
!
!

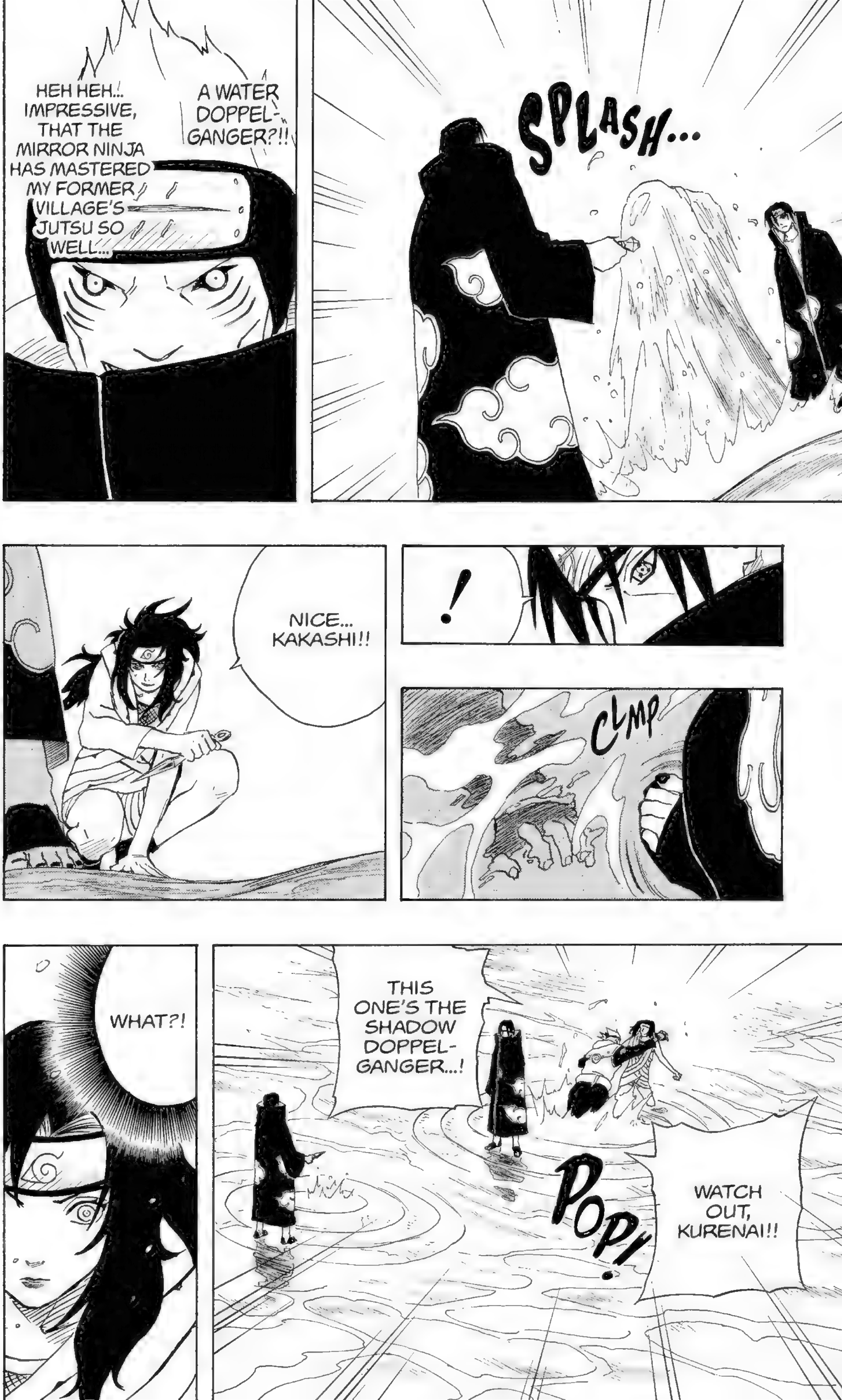

...IF YOU SPAR WITH HIM HEAD-ON, YOU WON'T GET AWAY SCOT-FREE...
AND IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH TIME, YOU'LL GIVE OTHER SHINOBI A CHANCE TO ARRIVE.
BUT...
DO NOT FORGET OUR PURPOSE...
YOU DID NOT COME HERE TO SUFFER INJURIES!
...AND PRAY TELL, WHAT MIGHT THAT PURPOSE BE...?
BOOF
...
...
WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR IS HERE...
...
LOOKING FOR...?

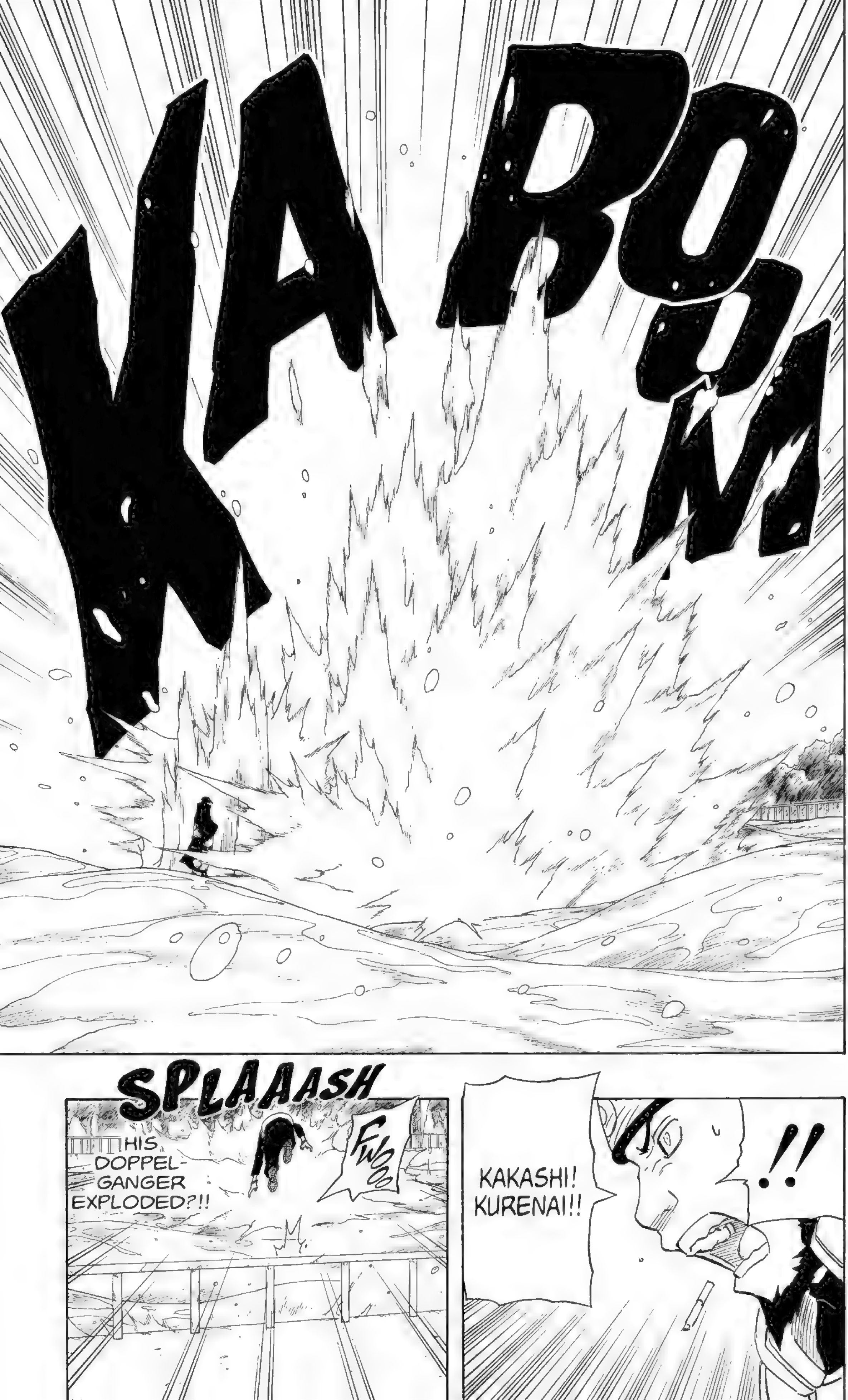

AND WHAT MIGHT YOU BE LOOKING FOR?
...
...I, UNLIKE KISAME, WOULDN'T TAKE ANY TIME AT ALL.

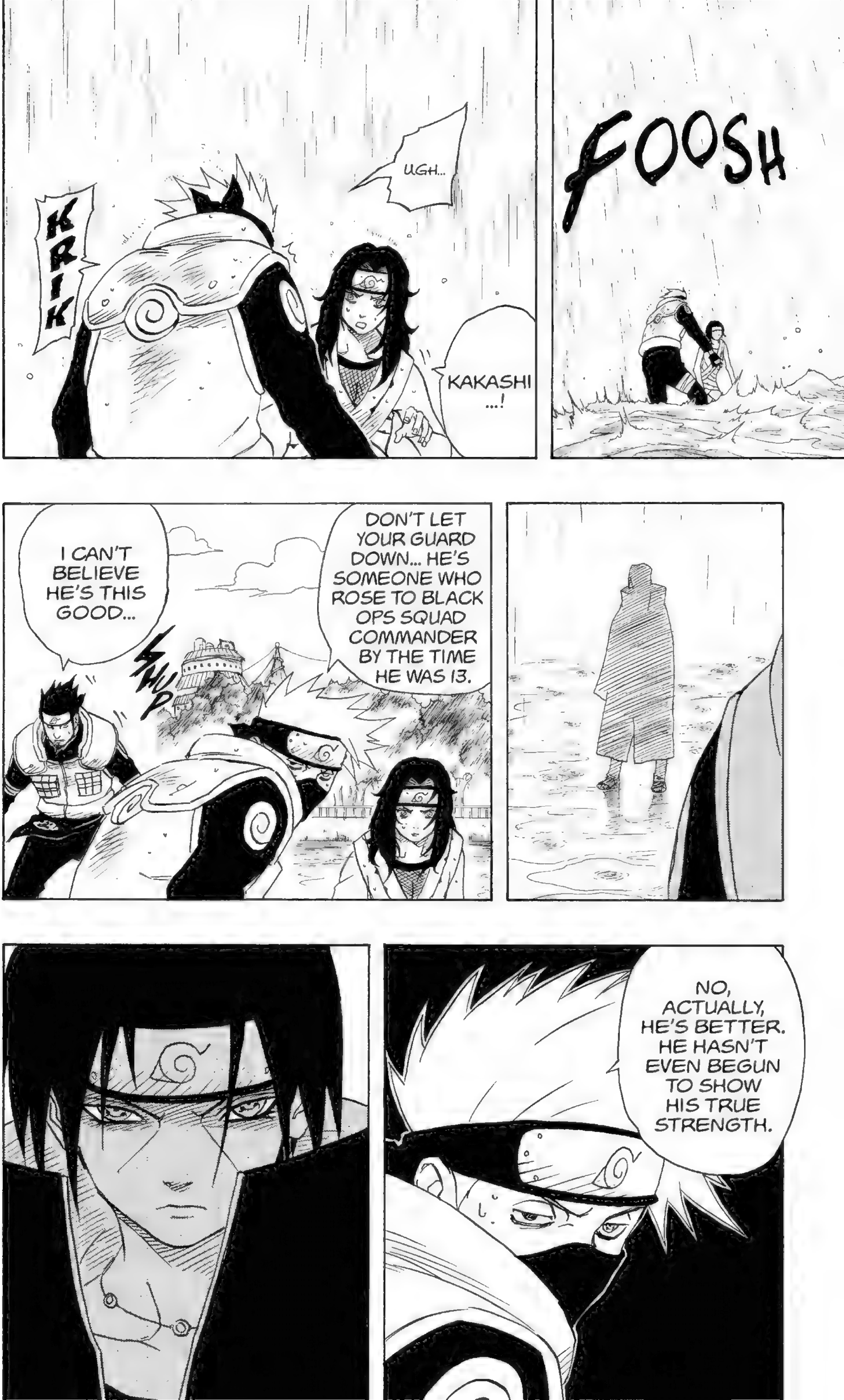

CLICK
NINJA ART!
SUITON SUIJINHEKI! WATER STYLE WATER WALL!!
FWIP
FWIP
VOOSH
VOOSH
VOOSH
VOOSH

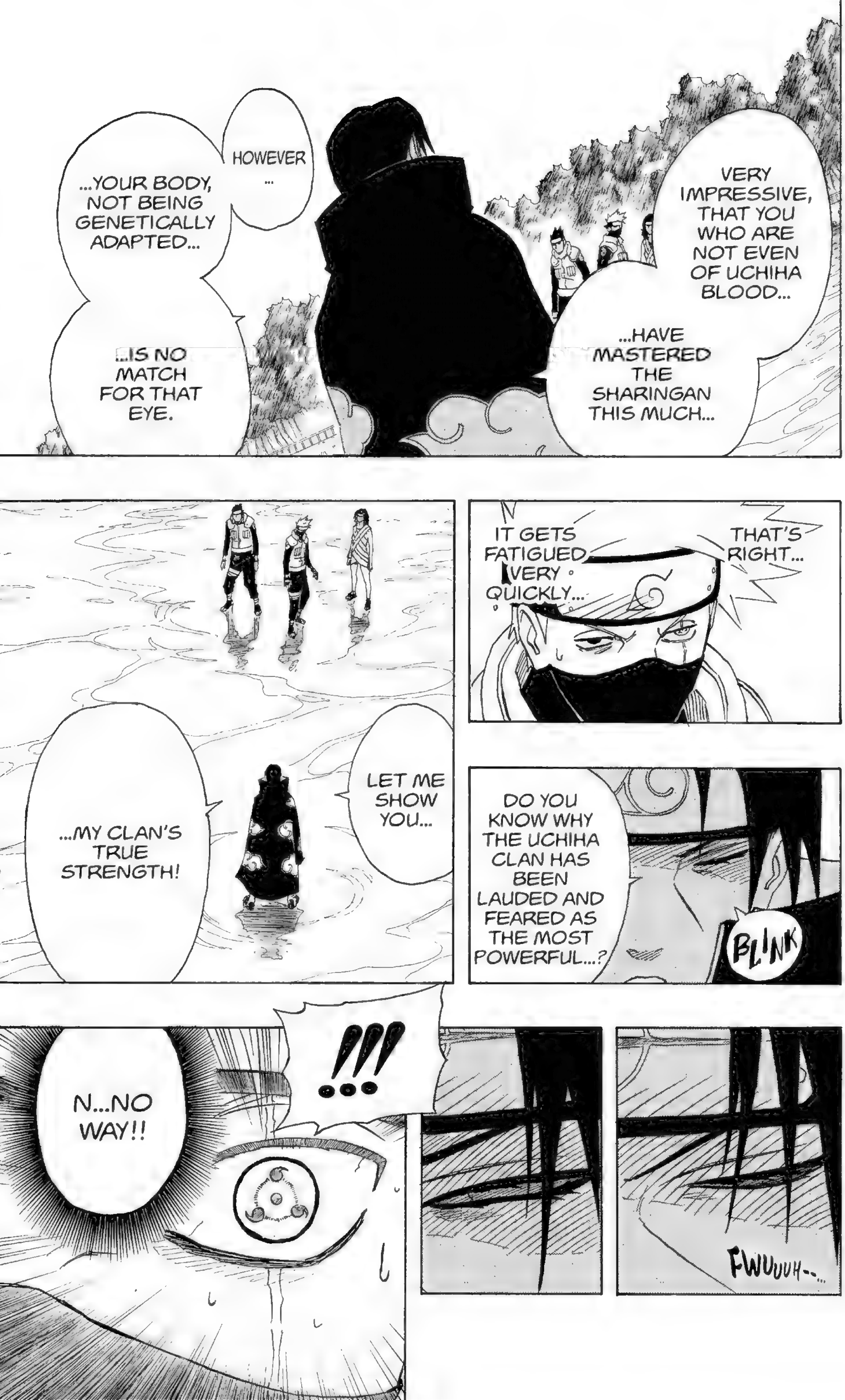
READ THIS WAY

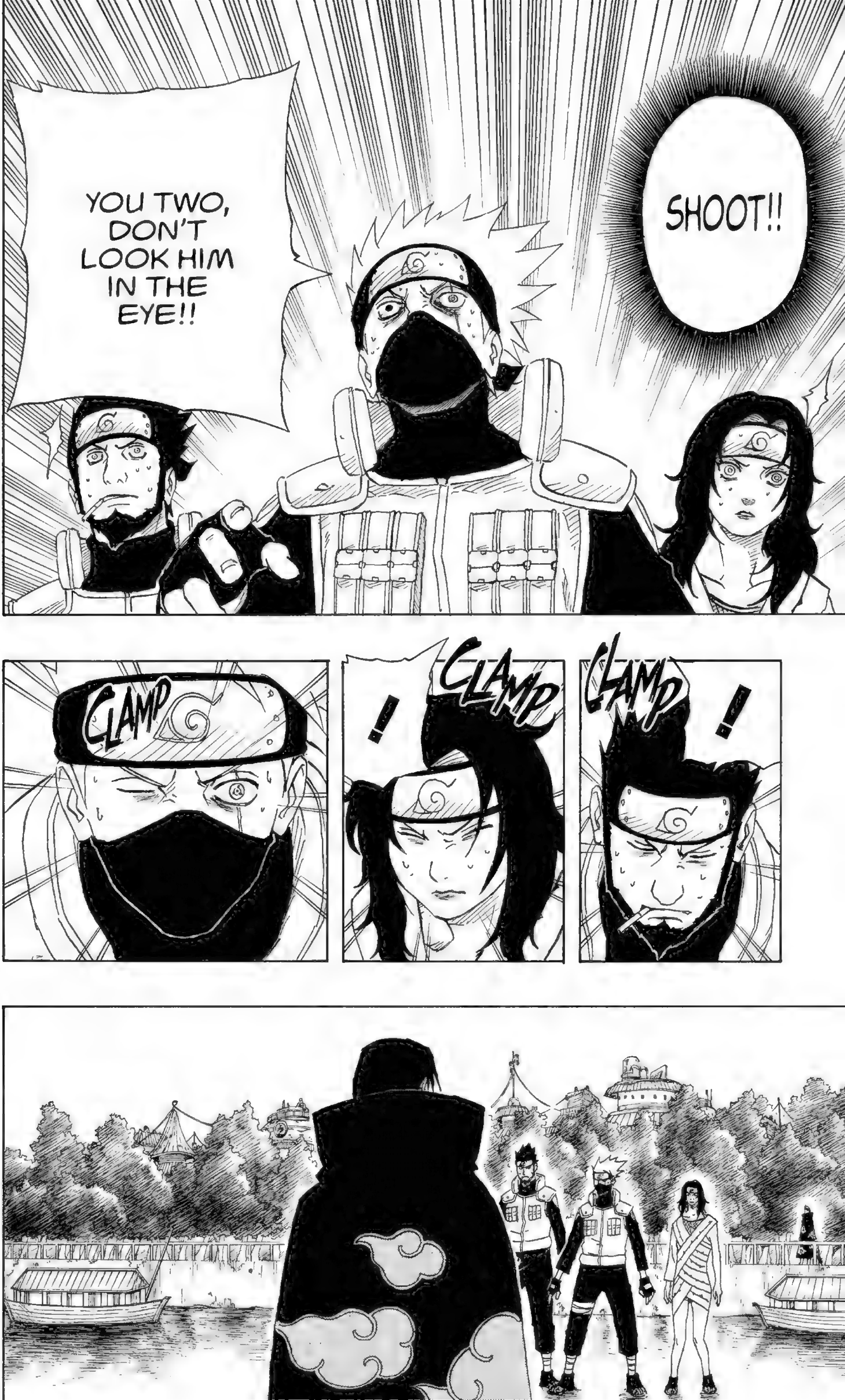

WHAT SPEED...! I COULDN'T FOLLOW HIS SIGN-WEAVING AT ALL...
FURTHERMORE, THAT HE WOULD USE THE SHURIKEN IN HIS RIGHT HAND AS A DECOY TO DISTRACT ME... WHILE LAUNCHING A SUITON ATTACK AT MY FEET. IMPRESSIVE.
SPLASH
TRUST YOU, KAKASHI, TO HAVE SUCH A SHARP SENSE OF PERCEPTION...
!!
...INDEED.
SKOOSH
A SHADOW DOPPELGANGER?!!
HE'S SUPERHUMAN...!!
...


A WATER DOPPELGANGER?!!
HEH HEH... IMPRESSIVE, THAT THE MIRROR NINJA HAS MASTERED MY FORMER VILLAGE'S JUTSU SO WELL...
SPLASH...
NICE... KAKASHI!!
!
CLMP
WHAT?!
THIS ONE'S THE SHADOW DOPPELGANGER...!
POP!
WATCH OUT, KURENAI!!

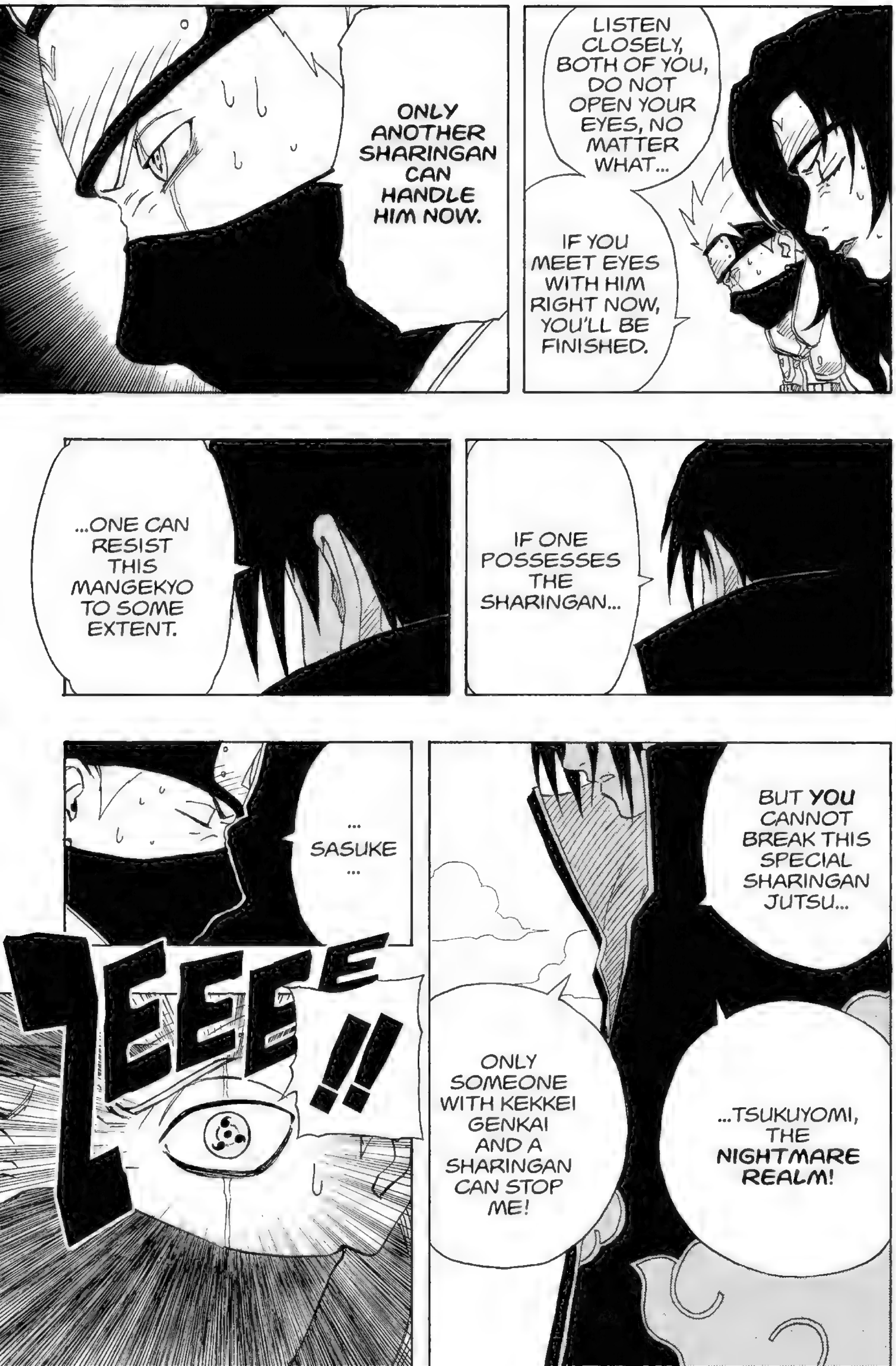

KABOOM
SPLAAASH
FWOOO
HIS DOPPELGANGER EXPLODED?!!
KAKASHI! KURENAI!!
!!

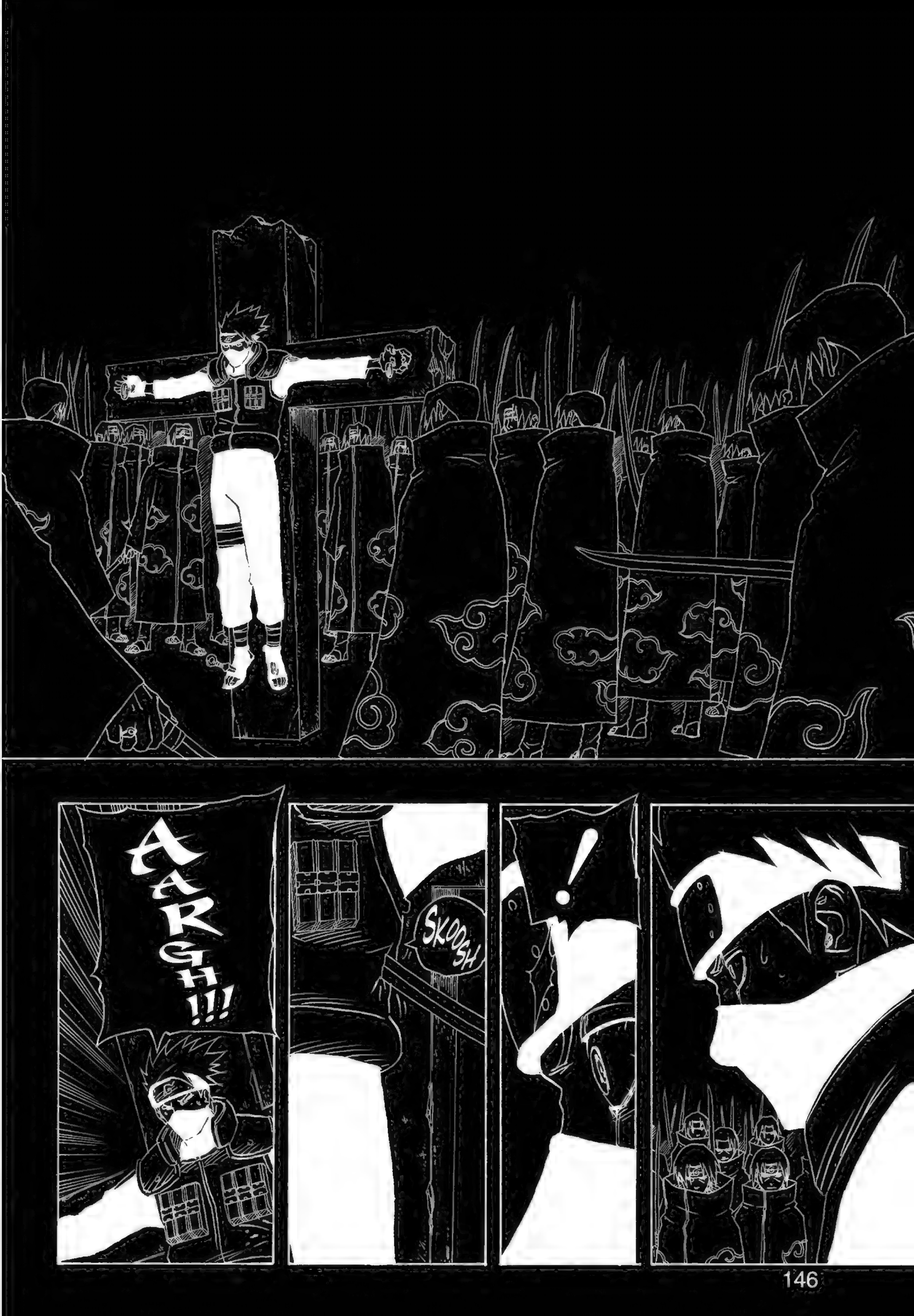

FOOSH
UGH...
KRIK
KAKASHI ...!
DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN... HE'S SOMEONE WHO ROSE TO BLACK OPS SQUAD COMMANDER BY THE TIME HE WAS 13.
SHUP
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S THIS GOOD...
NO, ACTUALLY, HE'S BETTER. HE HASN'T EVEN BEGUN TO SHOW HIS TRUE STRENGTH.

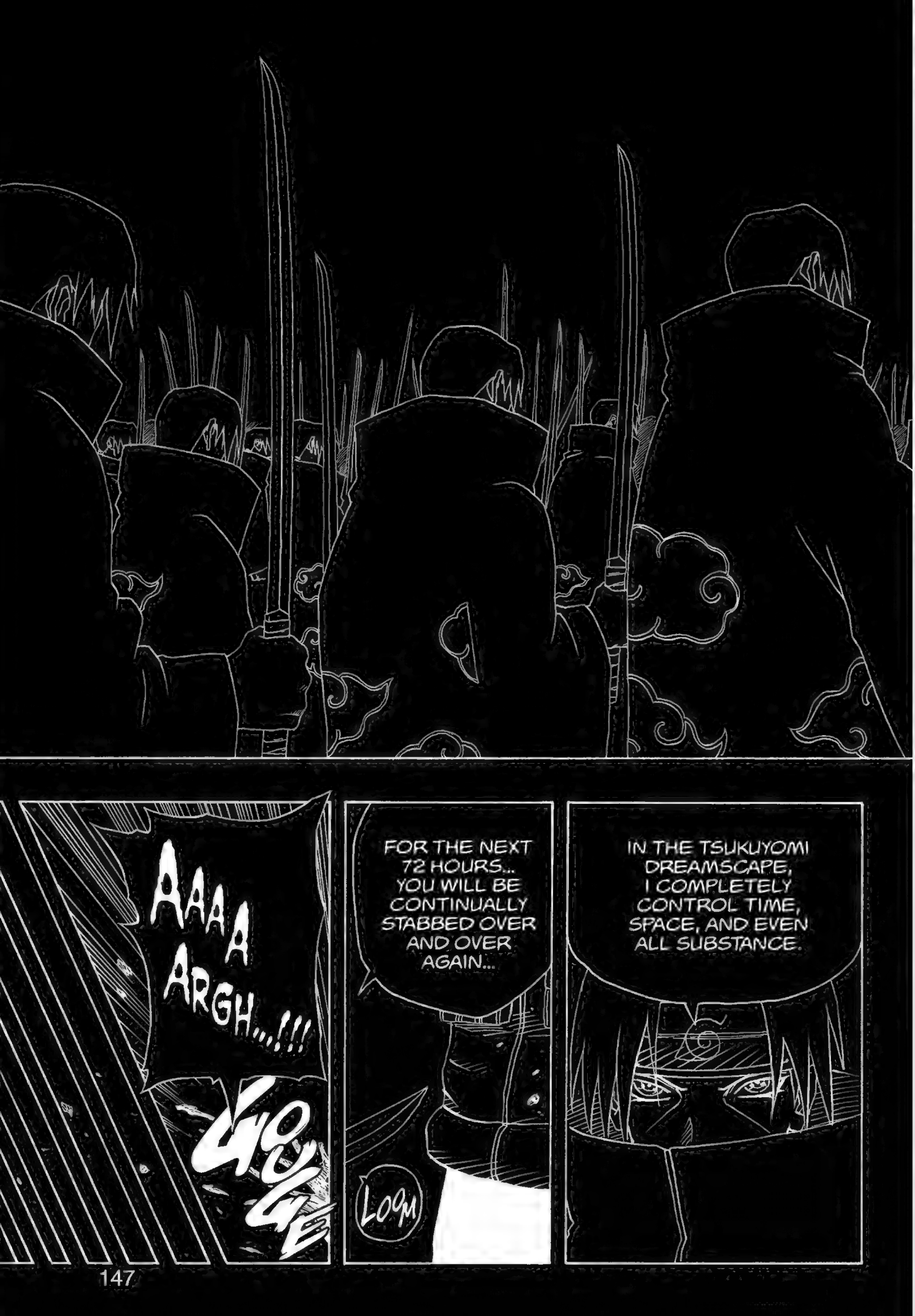

VERY IMPRESSIVE, THAT YOU WHO ARE NOT EVEN OF UCHIHA BLOOD...
...HAVE MASTERED THE SHARINGAN THIS MUCH...
HOWEVER...
...YOUR BODY, NOT BEING GENETICALLY ADAPTED...
...IS NO MATCH FOR THAT EYE.
THAT'S RIGHT...
IT GETS FATIGUED VERY QUICKLY...
DO YOU KNOW WHY THE UCHIHA CLAN HAS BEEN LAUDED AND FEARED AS THE MOST POWERFUL...?
BLINK
LET ME SHOW YOU...
...MY CLAN'S TRUE STRENGTH!
FWUUUH...
!!!
N...NO WAY!!

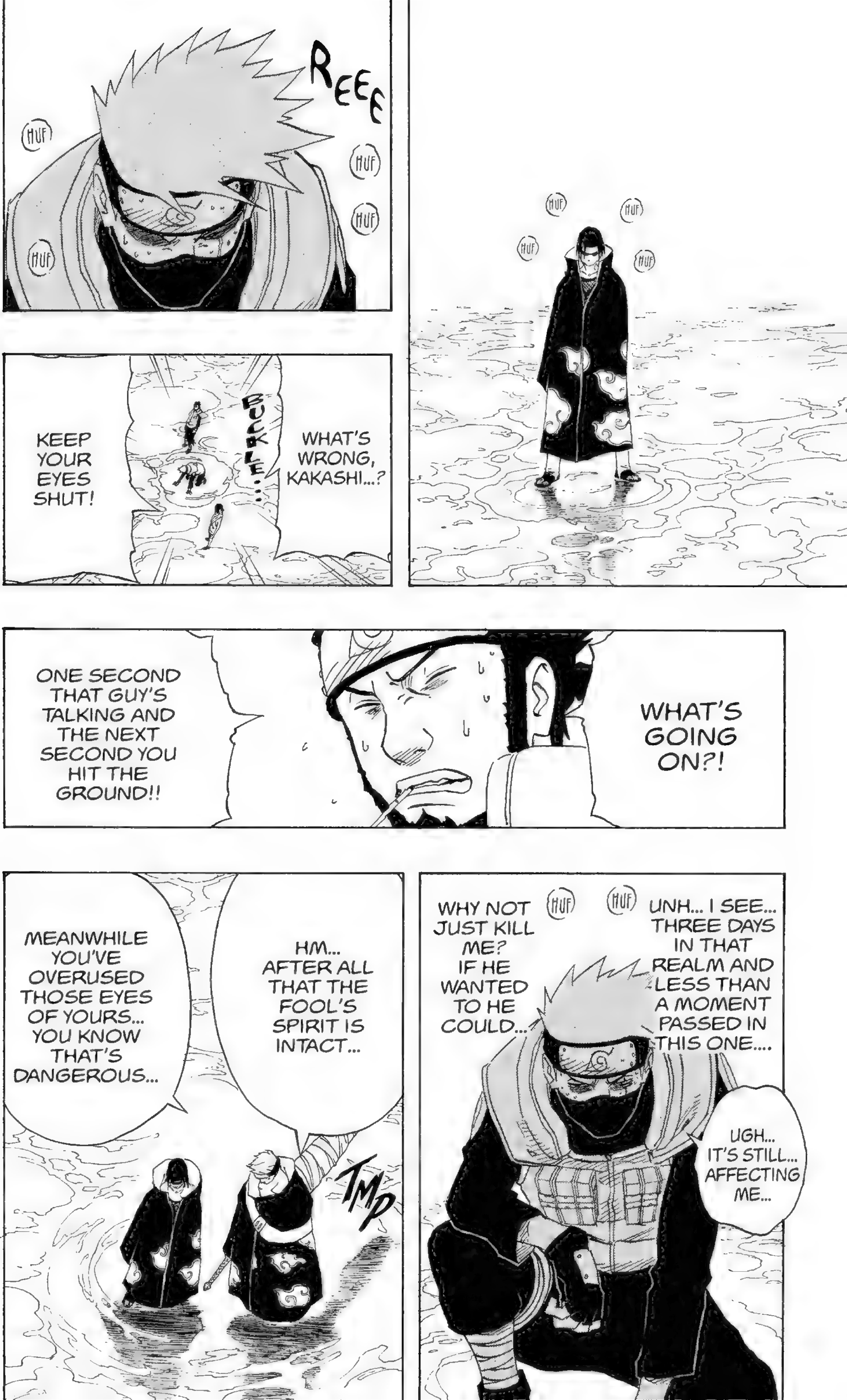

SHOOT!!
YOU TWO, DON'T LOOK HIM IN THE EYE!!
CLAMP
!
CLAMP
!
CLAMP

READ THIS WAY

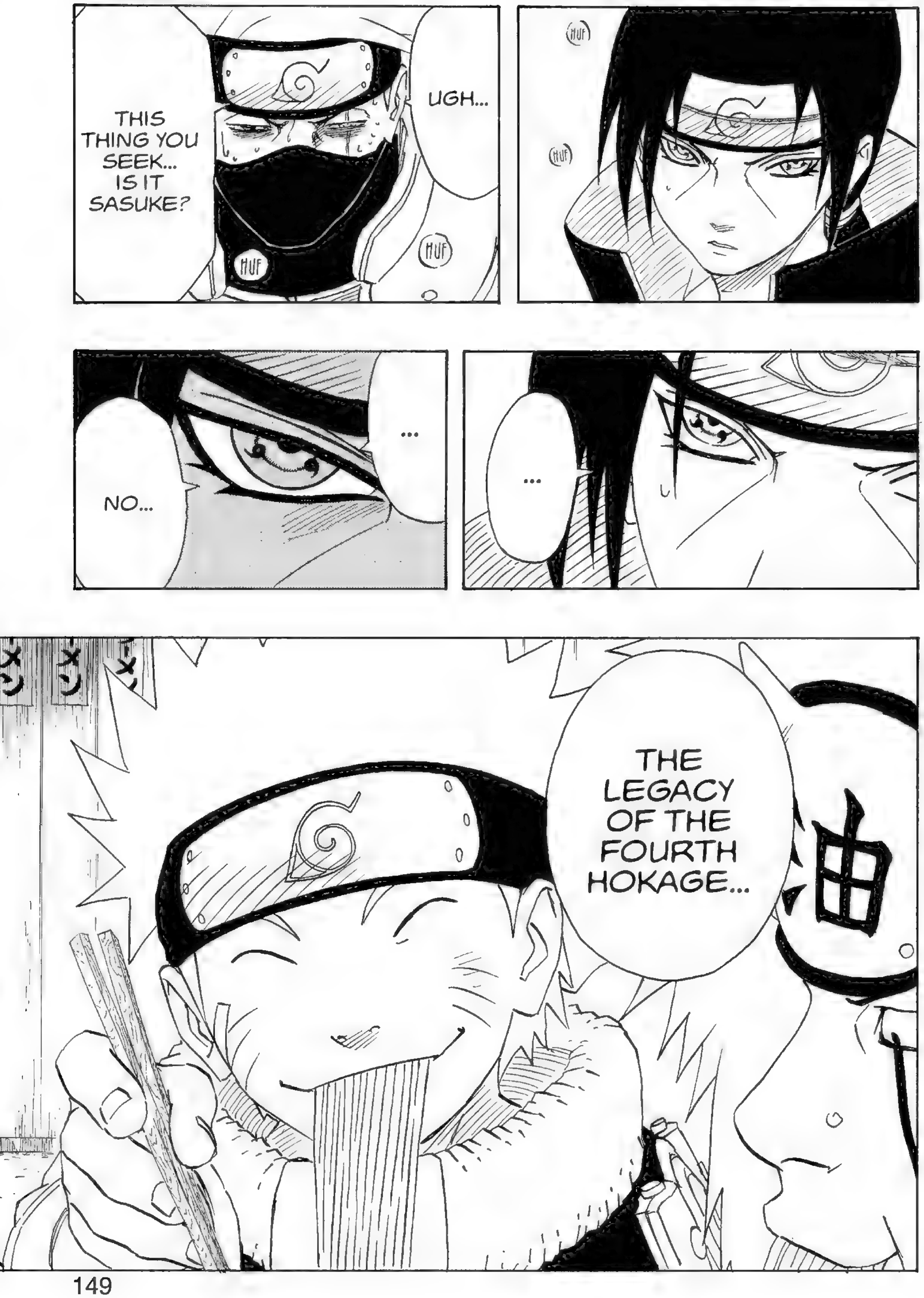

LISTEN CLOSELY, BOTH OF YOU, DO NOT OPEN YOUR EYES, NO MATTER WHAT...
IF YOU MEET EYES WITH HIM RIGHT NOW, YOU'LL BE FINISHED.
ONLY ANOTHER SHARINGAN CAN HANDLE HIM NOW.
IF ONE POSSESSES THE SHARINGAN...
...ONE CAN RESIST THIS MANGEKYO TO SOME EXTENT.
BUT YOU CANNOT BREAK THIS SPECIAL SHARINGAN JUTSU...
...TSUKUYOMI, THE NIGHTMARE REALM!
ONLY SOMEONE WITH KEKKEI GENKAI AND A SHARINGAN CAN STOP ME!
... SASUKE ...
ZEEEE!!


SKOOSH
!
AARGH!!!


IN THE TSUKUYOMI DREAMSCAPE, I COMPLETELY CONTROL TIME, SPACE, AND EVEN ALL SUBSTANCE.
FOR THE NEXT 72 HOURS... YOU WILL BE CONTINUALLY STABBED OVER AND OVER AGAIN...
LOOM
AAAA ARGH...!!!
GOUGE


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
REEE
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHAT'S WRONG, KAKASHI...?
BUCKLE...
KEEP YOUR EYES SHUT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
ONE SECOND THAT GUY'S TALKING AND THE NEXT SECOND YOU HIT THE GROUND!!
UNH... I SEE... THREE DAYS IN THAT REALM AND LESS THAN A MOMENT PASSED IN THIS ONE....
HUF
HUF
WHY NOT JUST KILL ME? IF HE WANTED TO HE COULD...
UGH... IT'S STILL... AFFECTING ME...
TMP
HM... AFTER ALL THAT THE FOOL'S SPIRIT IS INTACT...
MEANWHILE YOU'VE OVERUSED THOSE EYES OF YOURS... YOU KNOW THAT'S DANGEROUS...

READ THIS WAY


HUF
HUF
UGH...
THIS THING YOU SEEK... IS IT SASUKE?
HUF
HUF
...
...
NO...
THE LEGACY OF THE FOURTH HOKAGE...
油

## THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
## MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 24 CHAPTER 3

SO I IMMEDIATELY WENT TO BUY THE ISSUE OF *JUMP*, BUT MY HANDS WERE TREMBLING SO MUCH I COULDN'T HOLD ON TO IT VERY WELL. MY HEART WASN'T JUST POUNDING, IT WAS BOUNDING. I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO PAY FOR THE *JUMP*, AND I LOOKED FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENTS PAGE RIGHT AWAY. I SWEAR I ALMOST COLLAPSED!

WHICH IS IT?! DID I WIN?! DID I NOT WIN?! WHICH IS IT, DARN IT?! WITH SUCH IRRATIONAL TENSION, I EAGERLY FLIPPED THOUGH THE PAGES! (I BET I DIDN'T GET IT, DARN IT!!) AND SO, I FINALLY REACHED THE PAGE BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT PAGE FOR THE FEBRUARY HOP ☆ STEP AWARD, AND I SLOWLY TURNED THE PAGE.

**THIS ART LOOKS KIND OF FAMILIAR...**

THAT WAS MY FIRST IMPRESSION. ...THEN, IT STARTED SINKING IN...

***...THESE DRAWINGS... THEY'RE MY DRAWINGS... THEY'RE MY DRAWINGS! ...WHICH MEANS...***

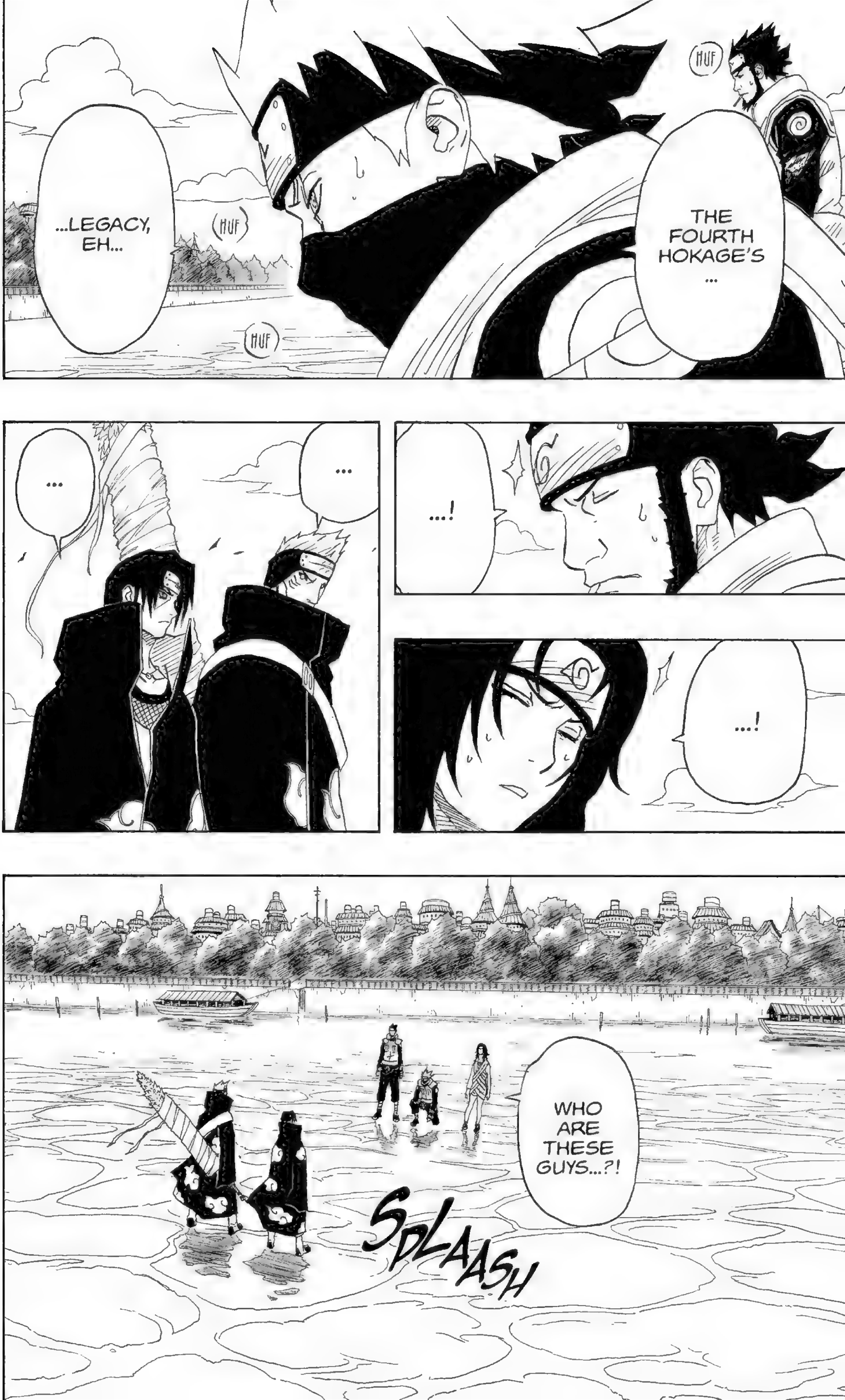
AND THEN, OBLIVIOUS TO ALL THE FOLK WHO WERE IN THAT CONVENIENCE STORE, I SUDDENLY CRIED OUT:

**"WHOA, WHOA"**

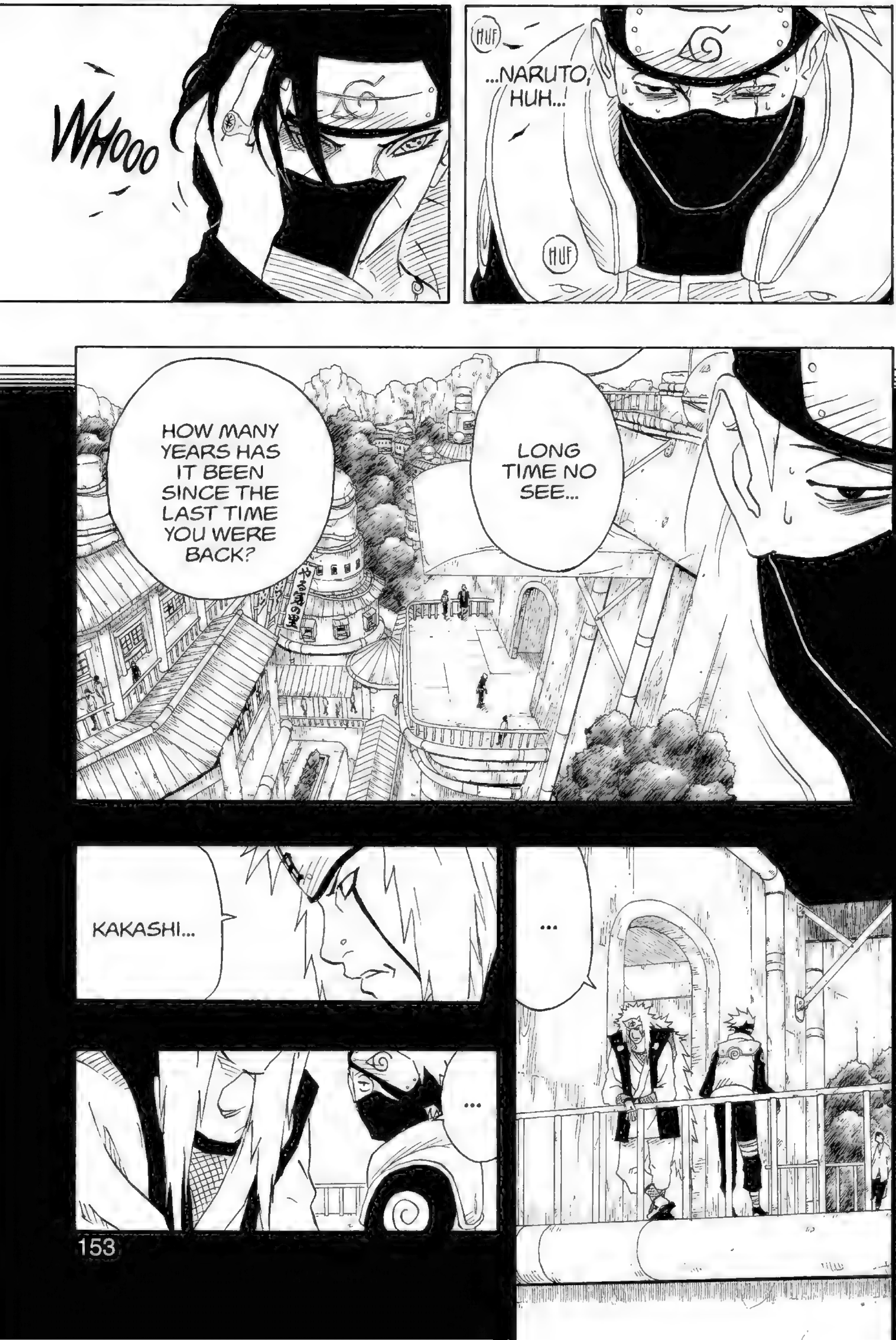
I SO COULDN'T SPEAK CLEARLY I MUST HAVE SEEMED LIKE A DERANGED LUNATIC WHO WAS CHANTING SOME WEIRD SPELL ...PROBABLY. AND THEN, I STARTED QUIVERING. I WAS SO ECSTATIC I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO EXPLODE, AND I EXITED THE STORE. ...SUDDENLY, FOR NO EXPLAINABLE REASON, I VIOLENTLY THREW THE *JUMP* ACROSS THE ROAD. THE MAGAZINE FLEW THROUGH THE AIR, PAGES FLAPPING! I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS A REMNANT SUBCONSCIOUS REFLEX FROM MY FORMER BASEBALL DAYS, BUT I DO REMEMBER RECEIVING QUITE A FEW COLD STARES FROM PASSERSBY. THEY WERE PROBABLY THINKING, (WHAT THE...! WHO IS THIS WHACKED-OUT GUY...?! WHAT A WEIRDO...!), BUT, YOU KNOW WHAT, I DON'T CARE AT ALL!! IT'S THE HAPPIEST MOMENT OF MY 21 YEARS OF LIFE, SO TOUGH!!

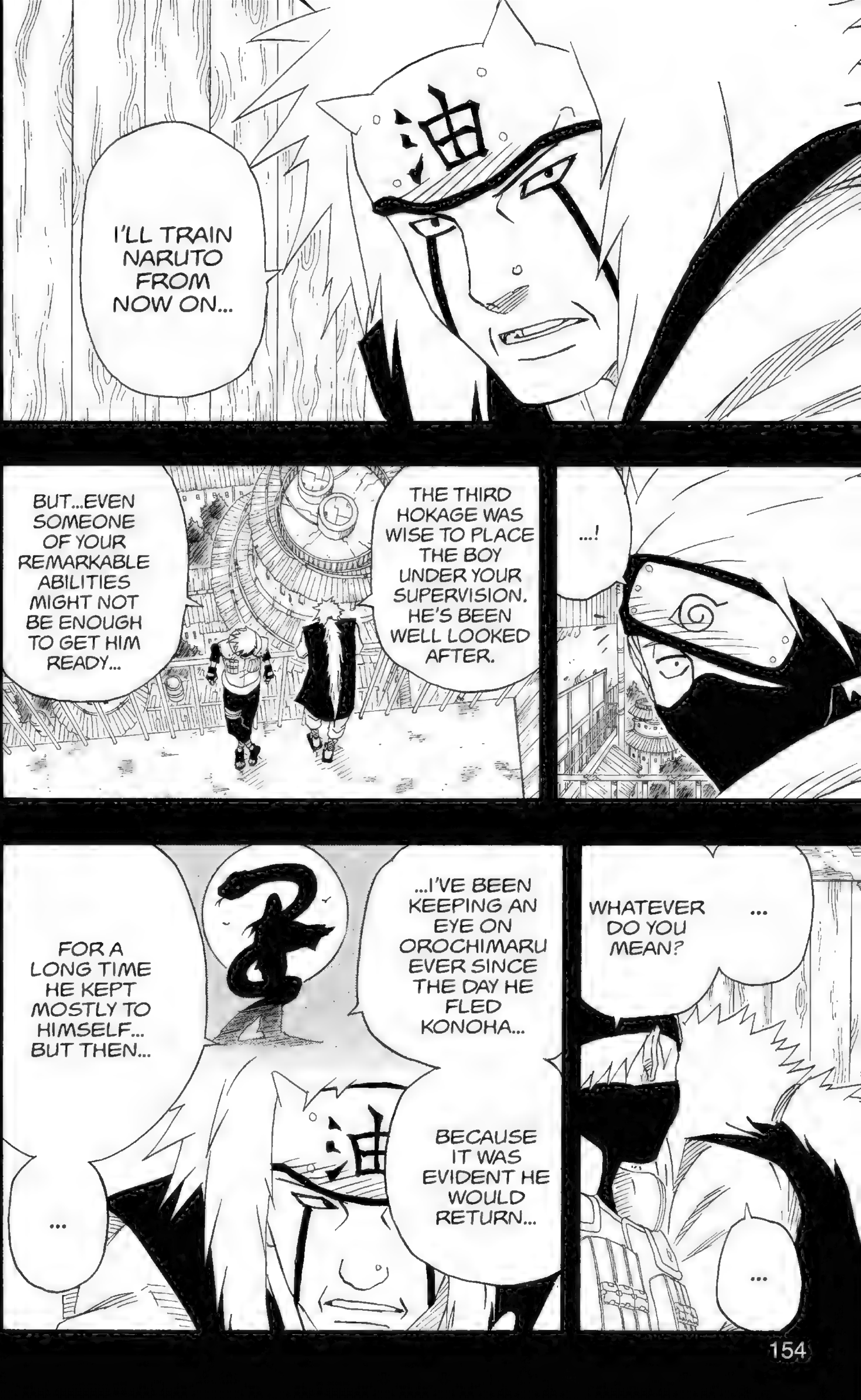
## Number 143:

# The Fourth Hokage's Legacy!!

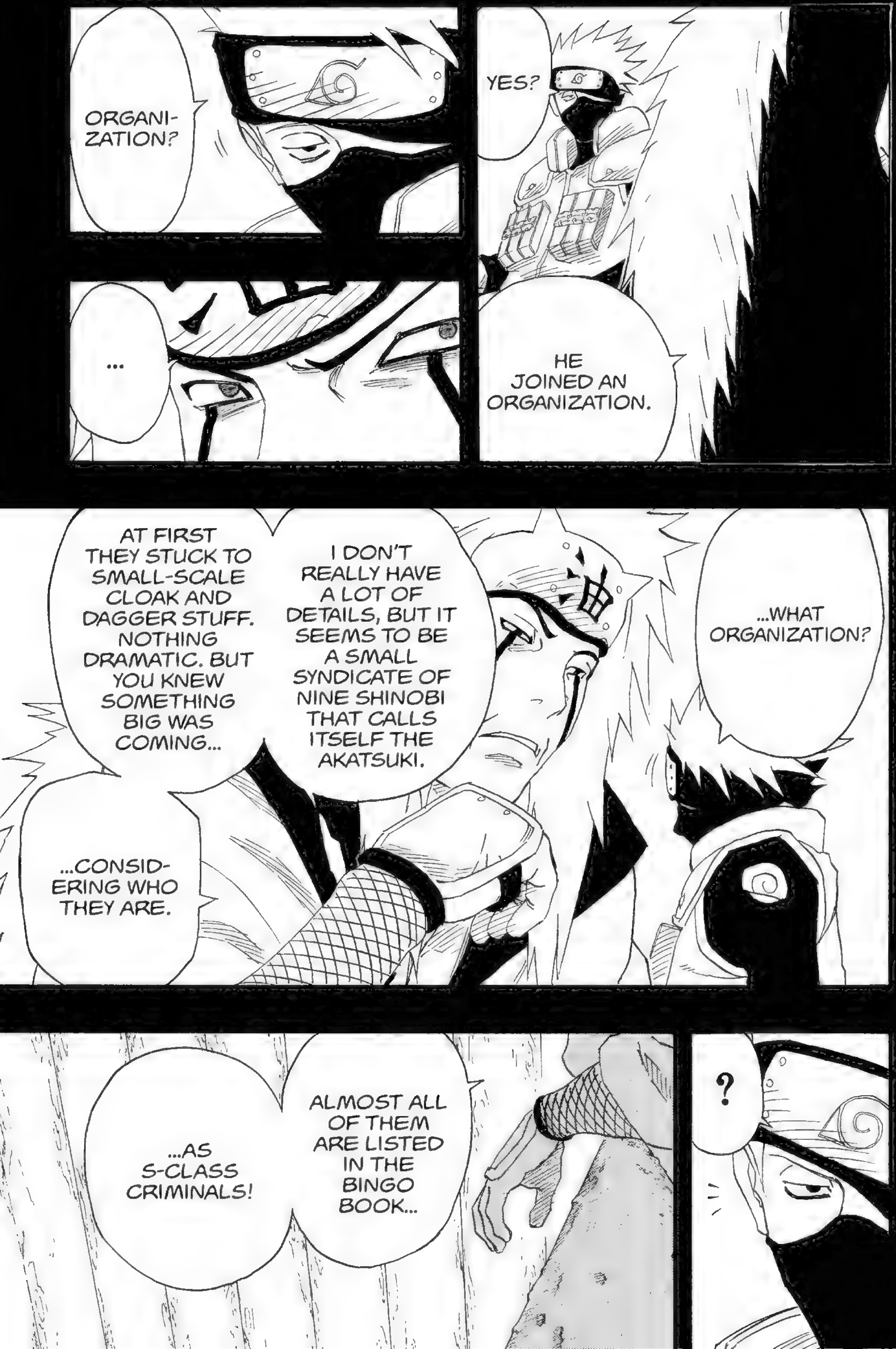

HUF
THE FOURTH HOKAGE'S ...
...LEGACY, EH...
HUF
HUF
...!
...!
...
...
WHO ARE THESE GUYS...?!
SPLASH

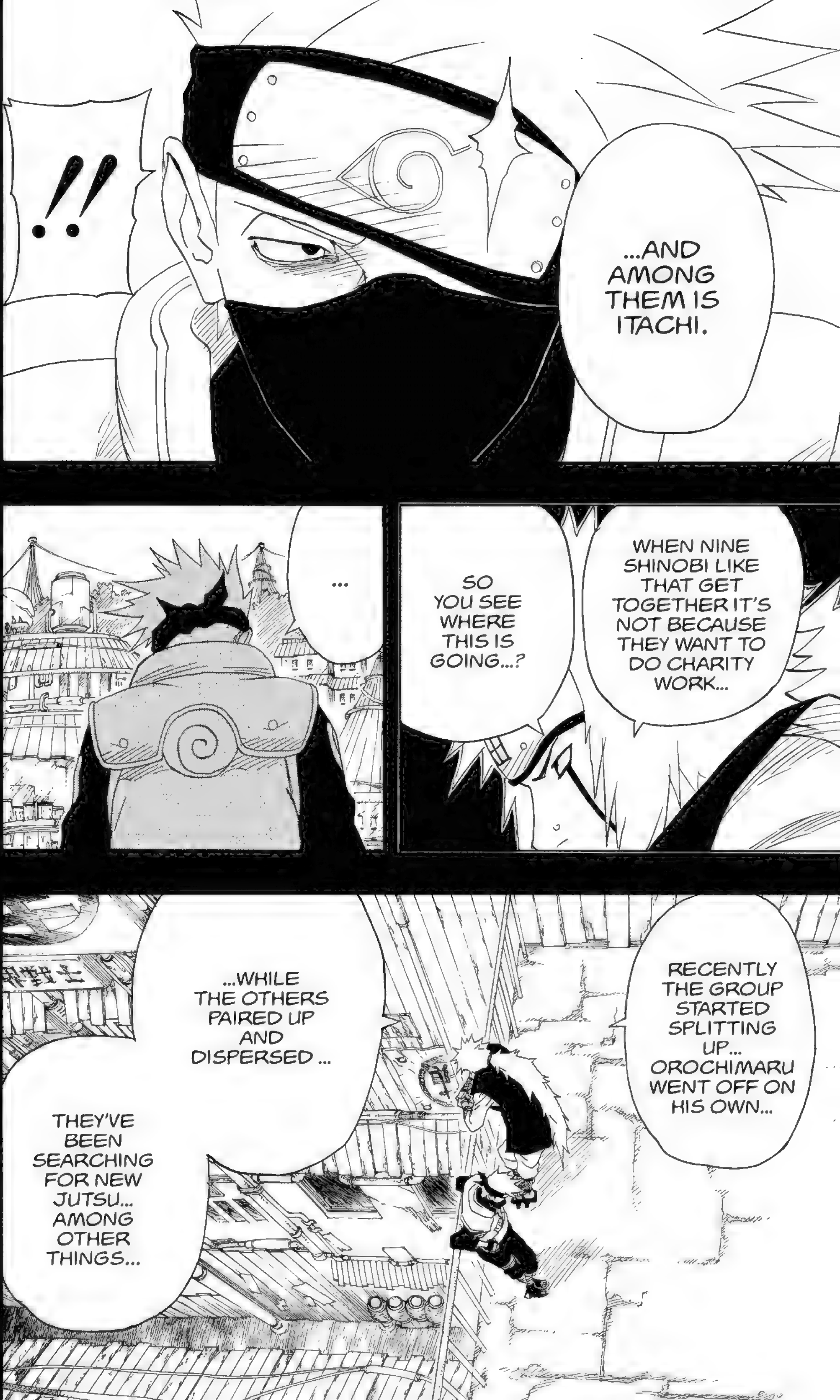
READ THIS WAY

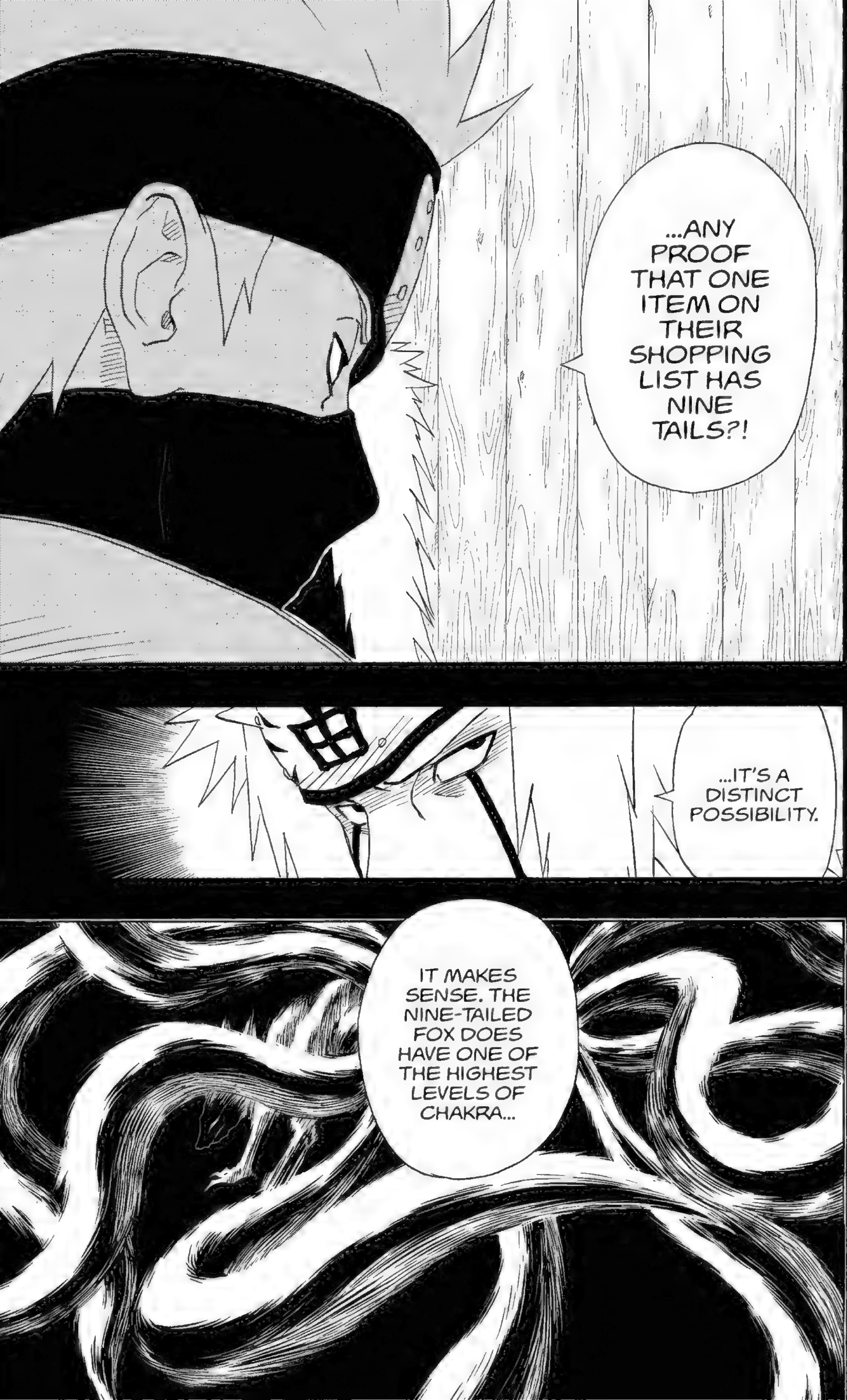

HUF
...NARUTO, HUH...!
HUF
WHOOO
LONG TIME NO SEE...
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU WERE BACK?
...
KAKASHI...
...

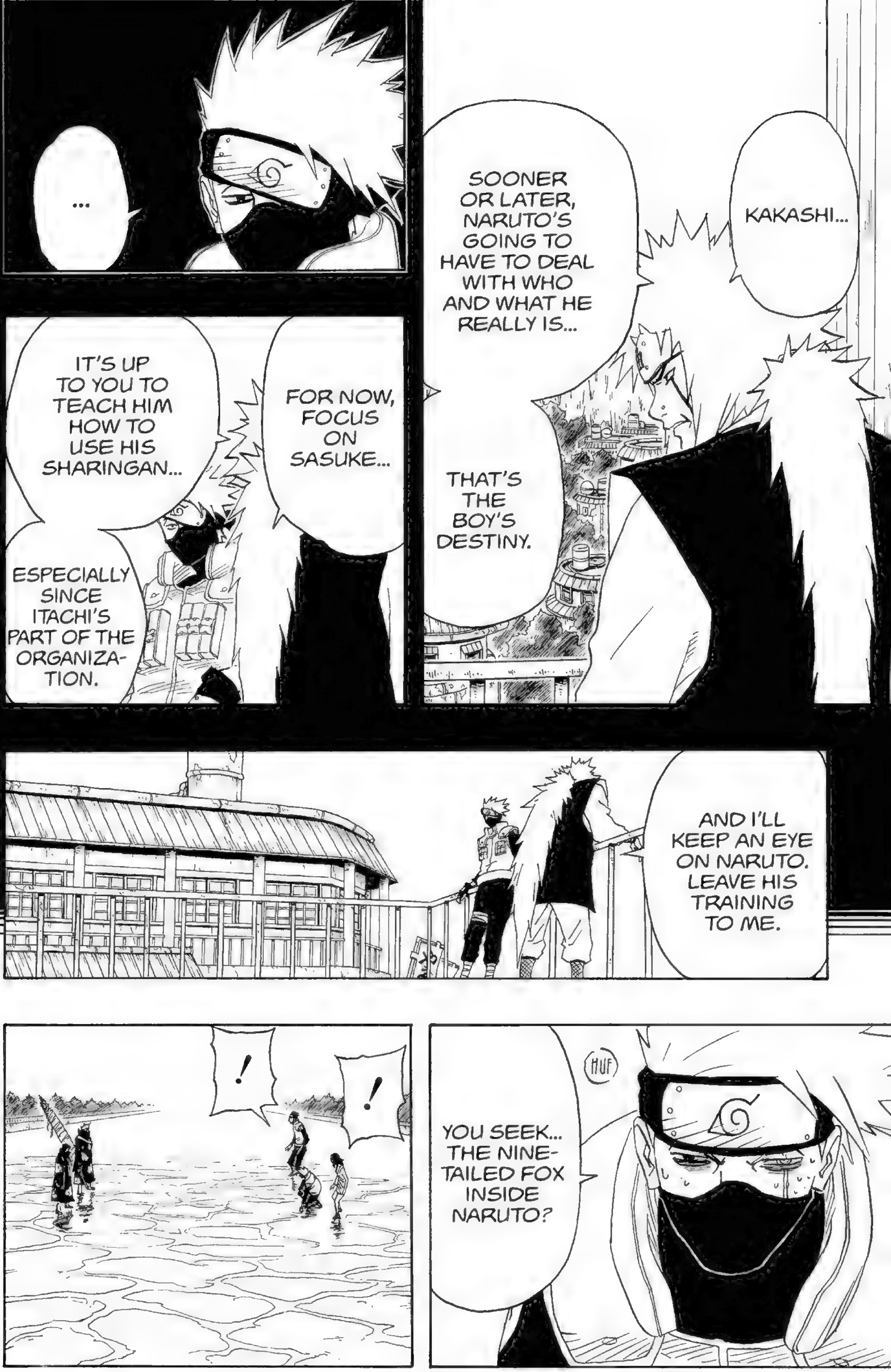

I'LL TRAIN NARUTO FROM NOW ON...
...!
THE THIRD HOKAGE WAS WISE TO PLACE THE BOY UNDER YOUR SUPERVISION. HE'S BEEN WELL LOOKED AFTER.
BUT...EVEN SOMEONE OF YOUR REMARKABLE ABILITIES MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH TO GET HIM READY...
...
WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?
...
...I'VE BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON OROCHIMARU EVER SINCE THE DAY HE FLED KONOHA...
BECAUSE IT WAS EVIDENT HE WOULD RETURN...
FOR A LONG TIME HE KEPT MOSTLY TO HIMSELF... BUT THEN...
...

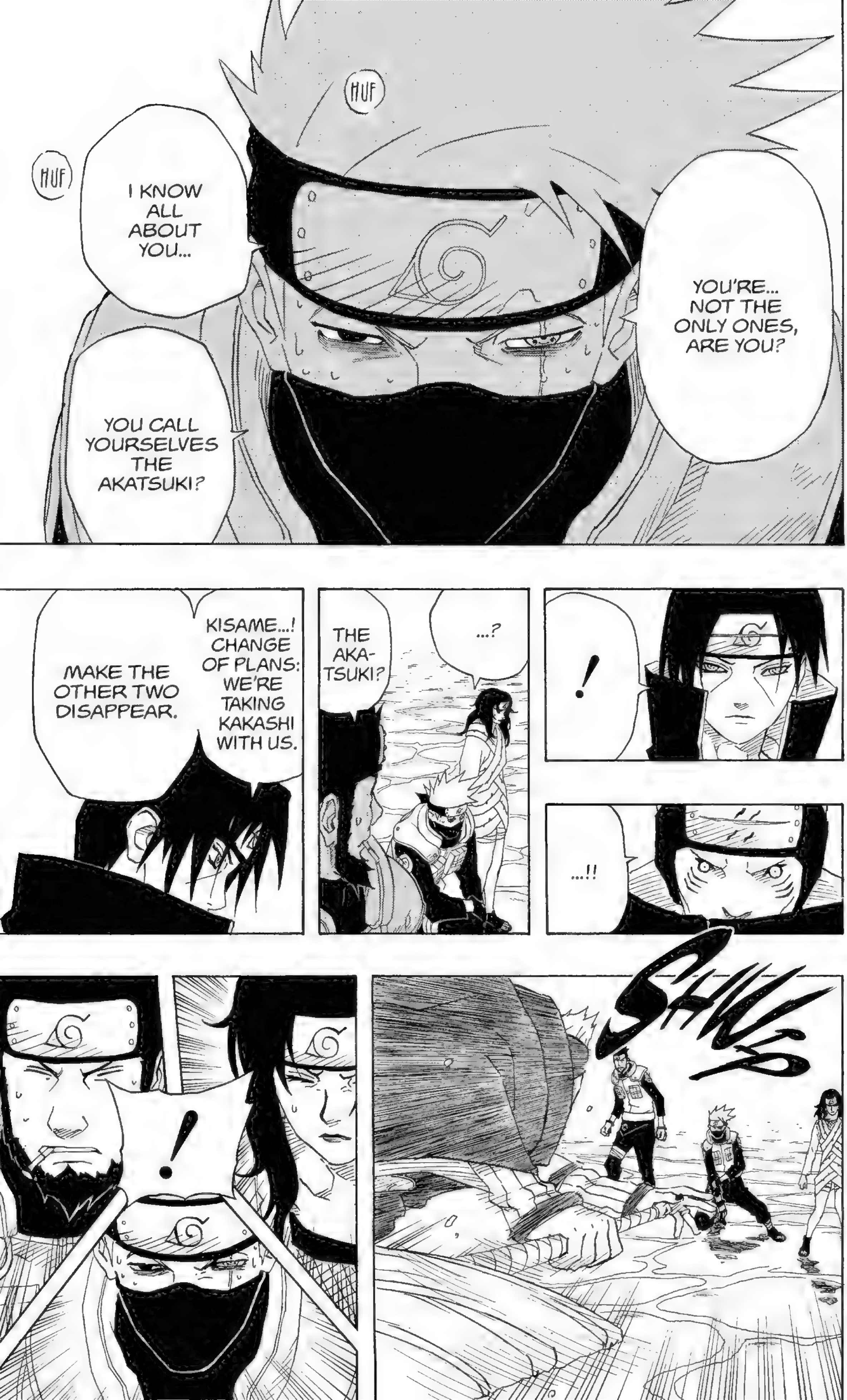
READ THIS WAY

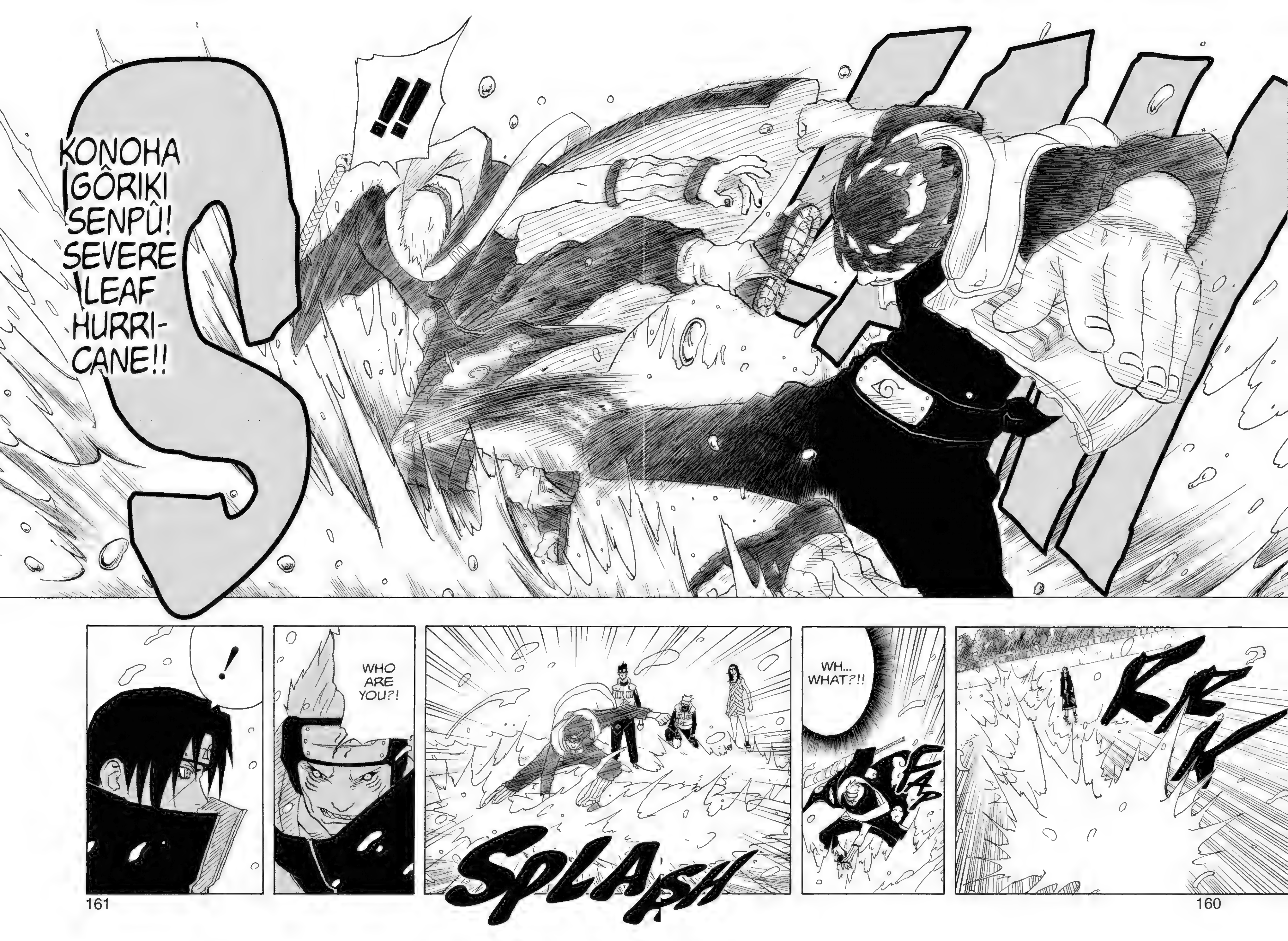

YES?
HE JOINED AN ORGANIZATION.
ORGANIZATION?
...
...WHAT ORGANIZATION?
I DON'T REALLY HAVE A LOT OF DETAILS, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE A SMALL SYNDICATE OF NINE SHINOBI THAT CALLS ITSELF THE AKATSUKI.
AT FIRST THEY STUCK TO SMALL-SCALE CLOAK AND DAGGER STUFF. NOTHING DRAMATIC. BUT YOU KNEW SOMETHING BIG WAS COMING...
...CONSIDERING WHO THEY ARE.
?
ALMOST ALL OF THEM ARE LISTED IN THE BINGO BOOK...
...AS S-CLASS CRIMINALS!

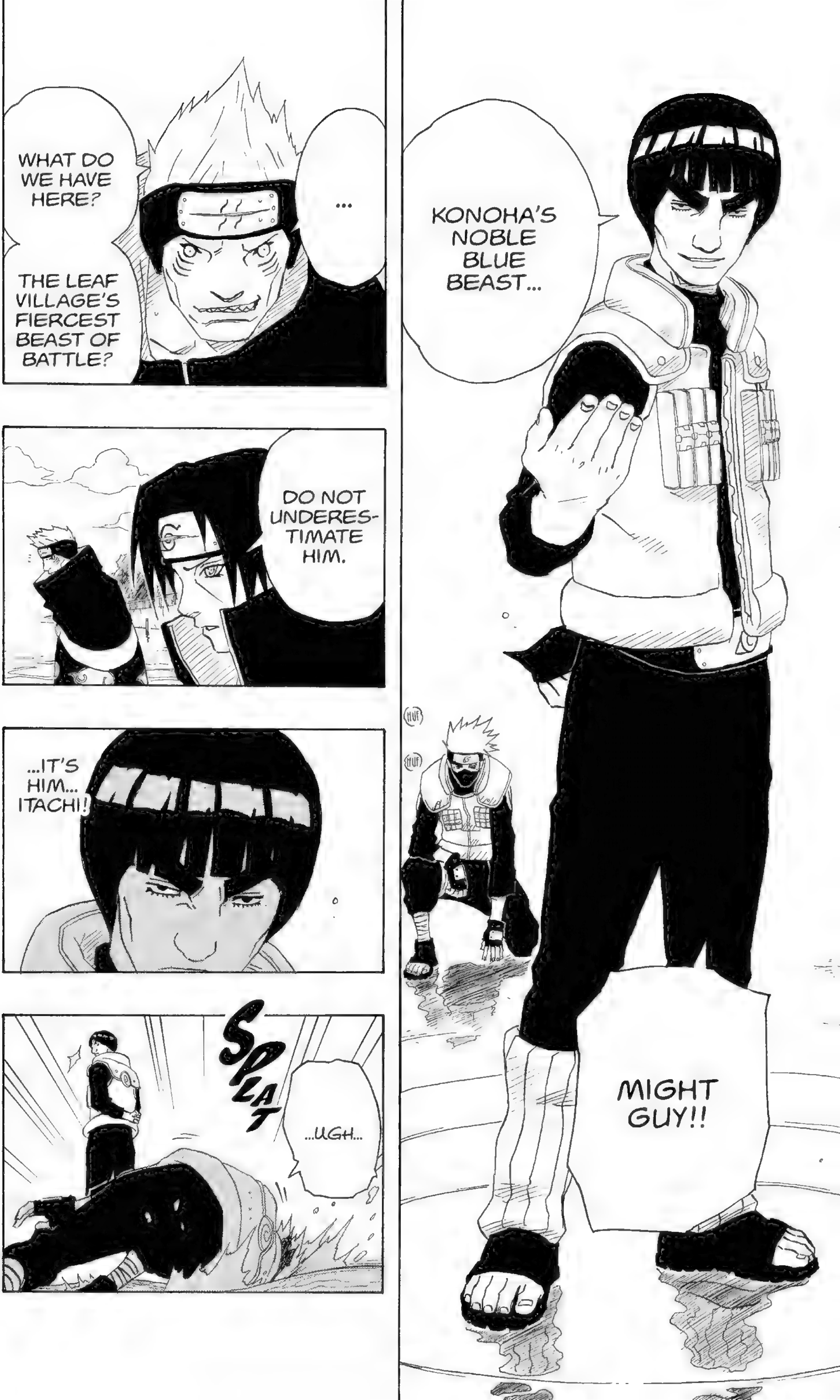

...AND AMONG THEM IS ITACHI.
!!
WHEN NINE SHINOBI LIKE THAT GET TOGETHER IT'S NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO DO CHARITY WORK...
SO YOU SEE WHERE THIS IS GOING...?
...
RECENTLY THE GROUP STARTED SPLITTING UP... OROCHIMARU WENT OFF ON HIS OWN...
...WHILE THE OTHERS PAIRED UP AND DISPERSED ...
THEY'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR NEW JUTSU... AMONG OTHER THINGS...


...ANY PROOF THAT ONE ITEM ON THEIR SHOPPING LIST HAS NINE TAILS?!
...IT'S A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY.
IT MAKES SENSE. THE NINE-TAILED FOX DOES HAVE ONE OF THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF CHAKRA...

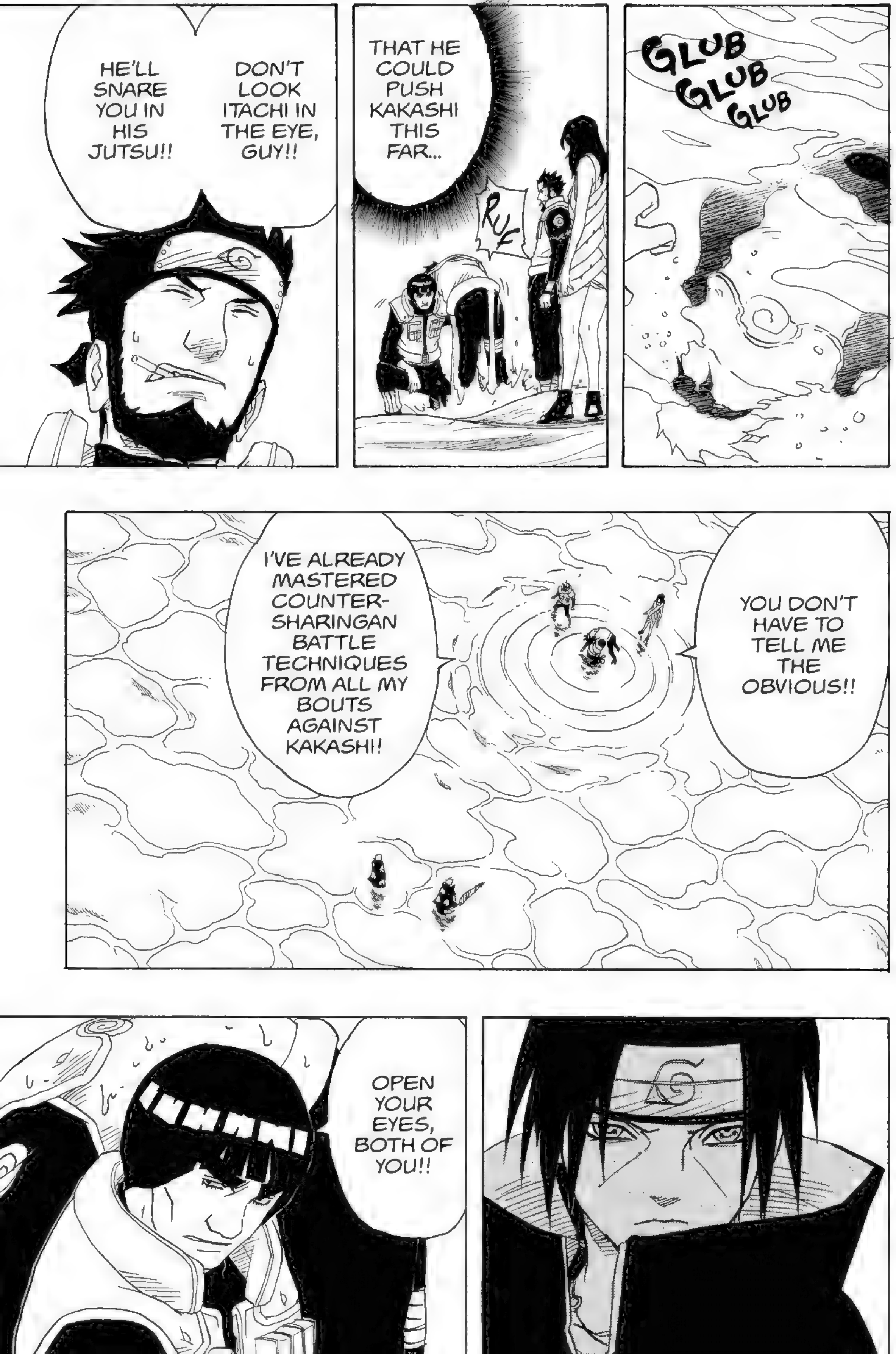

KAKASHI...
SOONER OR LATER, NARUTO'S GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH WHO AND WHAT HE REALLY IS...
THAT'S THE BOY'S DESTINY.
...
FOR NOW, FOCUS ON SASUKE...
IT'S UP TO YOU TO TEACH HIM HOW TO USE HIS SHARINGAN...
ESPECIALLY SINCE ITACHI'S PART OF THE ORGANIZATION.
AND I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON NARUTO. LEAVE HIS TRAINING TO ME.
HUF
YOU SEEK... THE NINE-TAILED FOX INSIDE NARUTO?
!
!

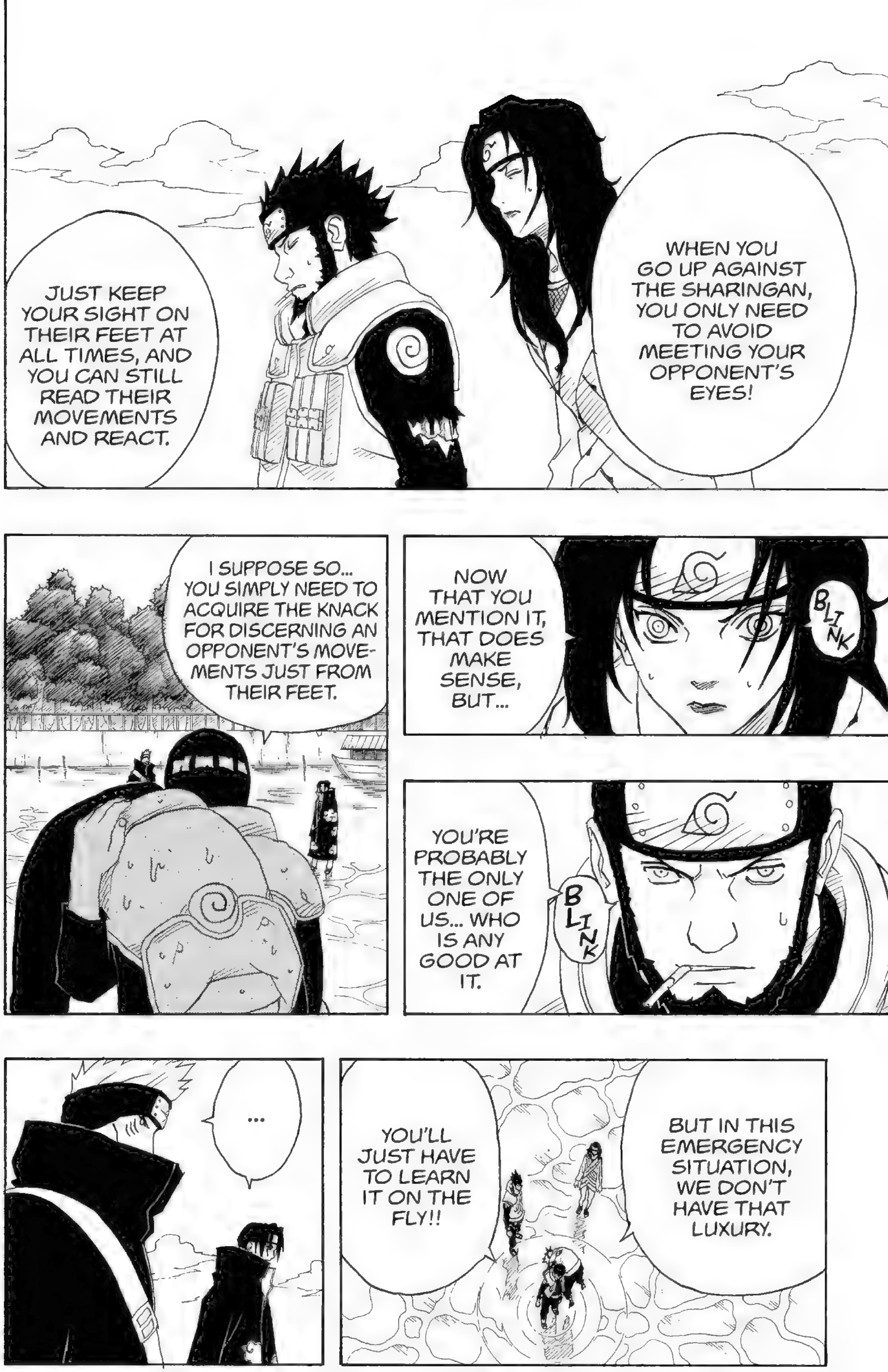

HUF
YOU'RE... NOT THE ONLY ONES, ARE YOU?
HUF
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU...
YOU CALL YOURSELVES THE AKATSUKI?
!
...!!
...?
THE AKA-TSUKI?
KISAME...! CHANGE OF PLANS: WE'RE TAKING KAKASHI WITH US.
MAKE THE OTHER TWO DISAPPEAR.
SHING
!


!!
KONOHA GÔRIKI SENPÛ! SEVERE LEAF HURRICANE!!
KRRK
WH... WHAT?!!
FAP
SPLASH
WHO ARE YOU?!
!

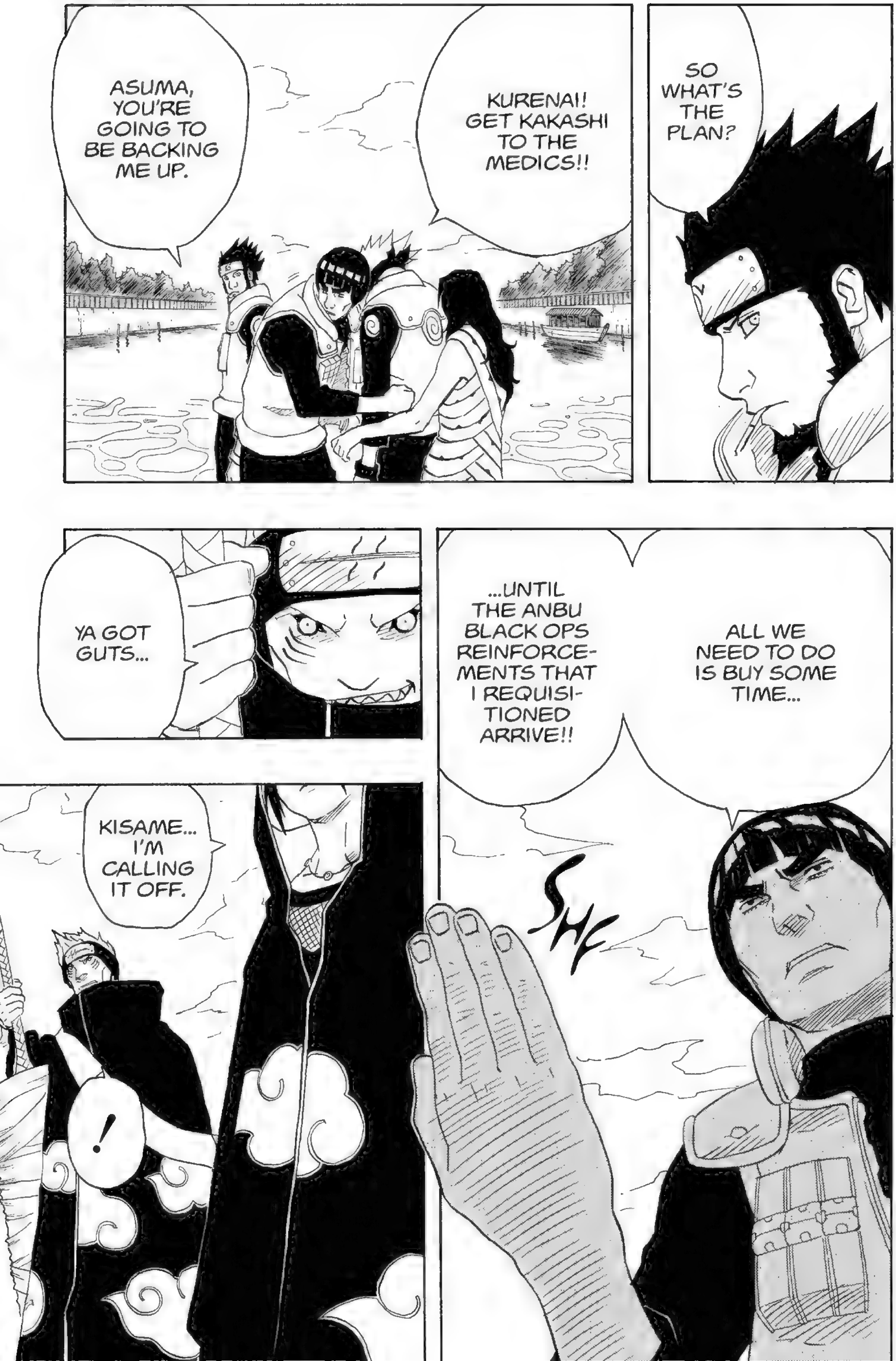

KONOHA'S NOBLE BLUE BEAST...
HUF
HUF
MIGHT GUY!!
...
WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?
THE LEAF VILLAGE'S FIERCEST BEAST OF BATTLE?
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HIM.
...IT'S HIM... ITACHI!
SPLAT
...UGH...

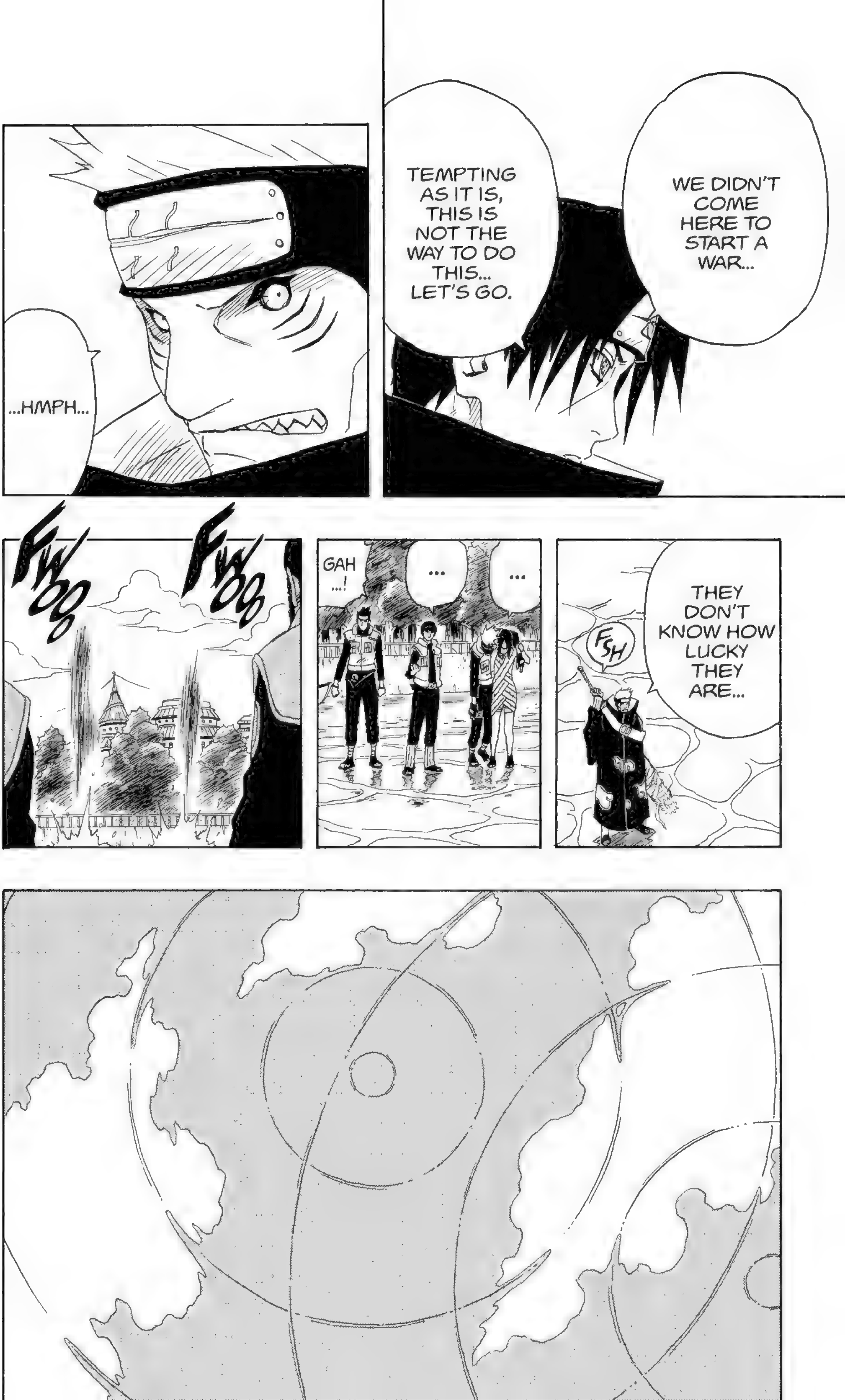
READ THIS WAY

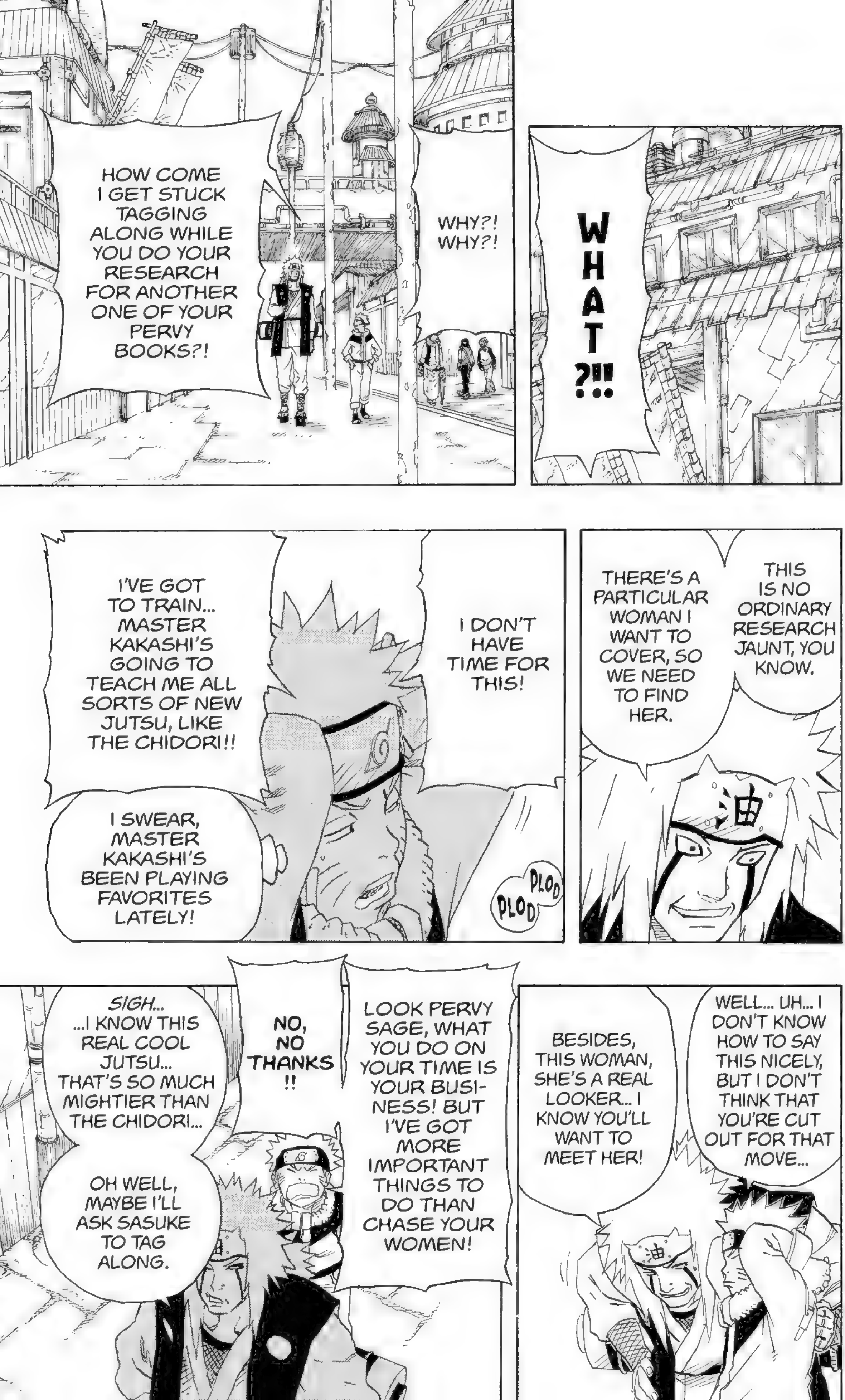

GLUB GLUB GLUB
THAT HE COULD PUSH KAKASHI THIS FAR...
RUF
DON'T LOOK ITACHI IN THE EYE, GUY!!
HE'LL SNARE YOU IN HIS JUTSU!!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME THE OBVIOUS!!
I'VE ALREADY MASTERED COUNTER-SHARINGAN BATTLE TECHNIQUES FROM ALL MY BOUTS AGAINST KAKASHI!
OPEN YOUR EYES, BOTH OF YOU!!

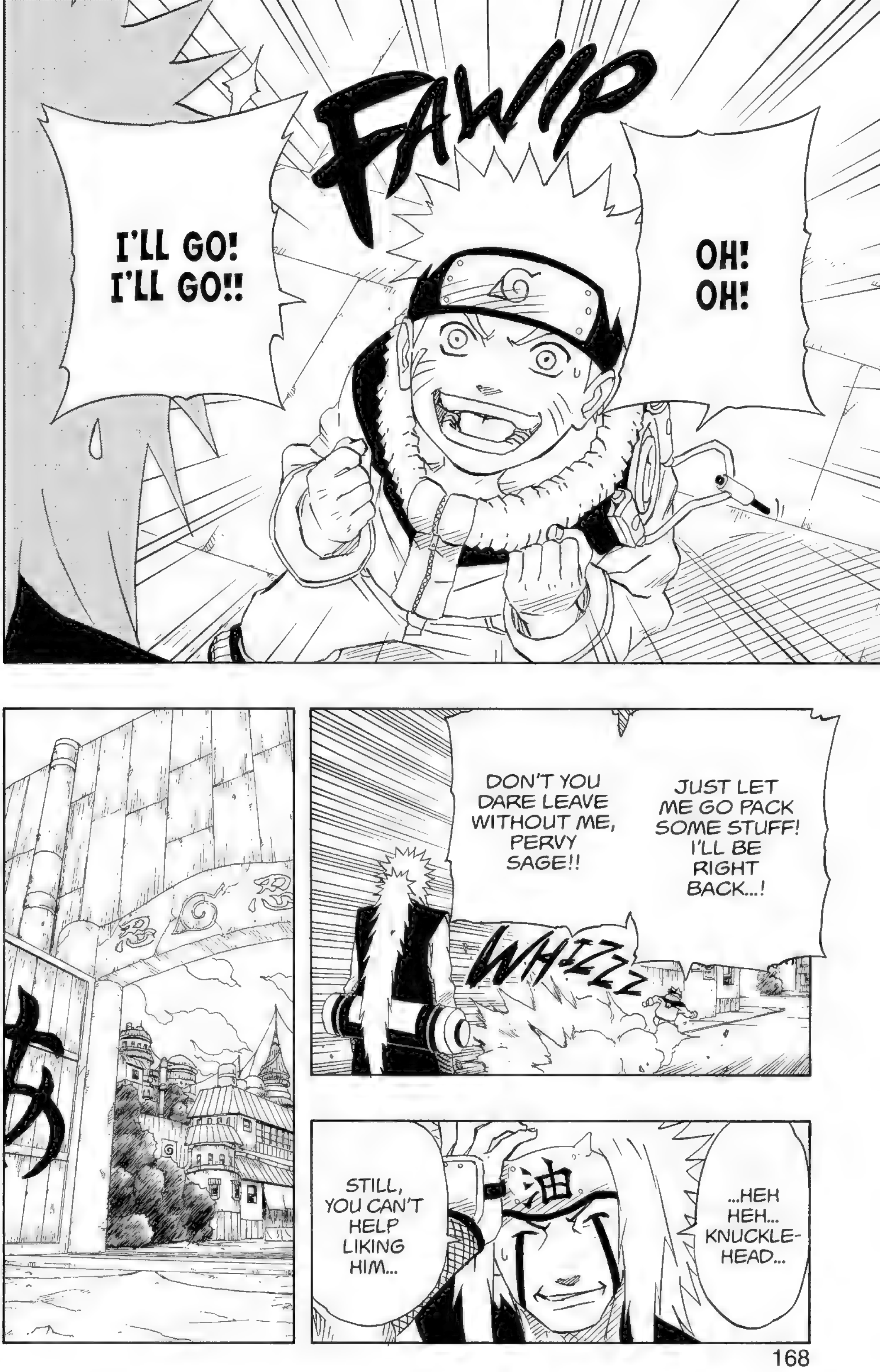

WHEN YOU GO UP AGAINST THE SHARINGAN, YOU ONLY NEED TO AVOID MEETING YOUR OPPONENT'S EYES!
JUST KEEP YOUR SIGHT ON THEIR FEET AT ALL TIMES, AND YOU CAN STILL READ THEIR MOVEMENTS AND REACT.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THAT DOES MAKE SENSE, BUT...
BLINK
YOU'RE PROBABLY THE ONLY ONE OF US... WHO IS ANY GOOD AT IT.
BLINK
I SUPPOSE SO... YOU SIMPLY NEED TO ACQUIRE THE KNACK FOR DISCERNING AN OPPONENT'S MOVEMENTS JUST FROM THEIR FEET.
BUT IN THIS EMERGENCY SITUATION, WE DON'T HAVE THAT LUXURY.
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO LEARN IT ON THE FLY!!
...

READ THIS WAY

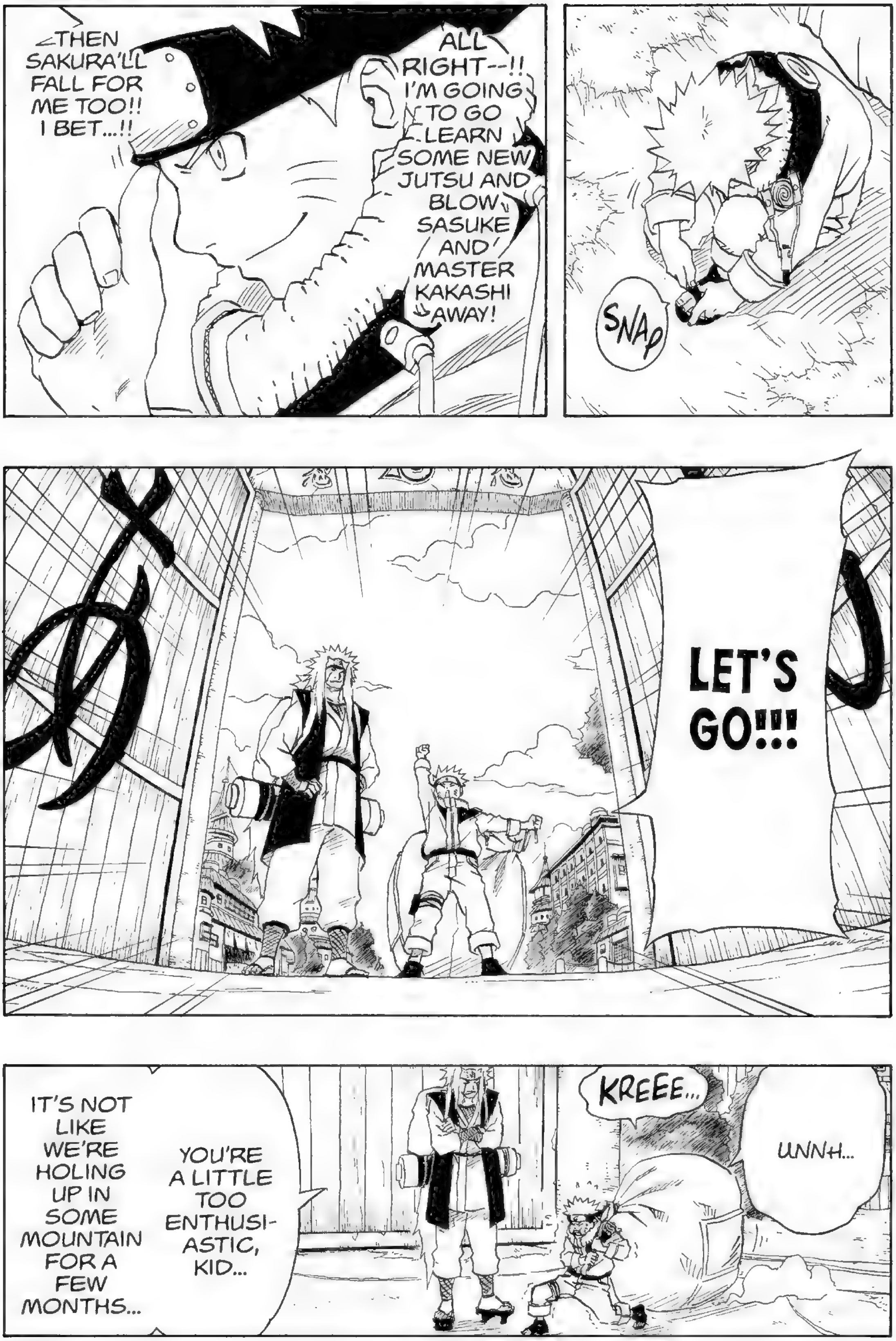

SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?
KURENAI! GET KAKASHI TO THE MEDICS!!
ASUMA, YOU'RE GOING TO BE BACKING ME UP.
ALL WE NEED TO DO IS BUY SOME TIME...
...UNTIL THE ANBU BLACK OPS REINFORCEMENTS THAT I REQUISITIONED ARRIVE!!
YA GOT GUTS...
SHF
KISAME... I'M CALLING IT OFF.
!


WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO START A WAR...
TEMPTING AS IT IS, THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO DO THIS... LET'S GO.
...HMPH...
THEY DON'T KNOW HOW LUCKY THEY ARE...
FSH
...
...
GAH ...!
FWOOO
FWOOO


HOW COME I GET STUCK TAGGING ALONG WHILE YOU DO YOUR RESEARCH FOR ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR PERVY BOOKS?!
WHY?! WHY?!
WHAT?!!
I'VE GOT TO TRAIN... MASTER KAKASHI'S GOING TO TEACH ME ALL SORTS OF NEW JUTSU, LIKE THE CHIDORI!!
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
I SWEAR, MASTER KAKASHI'S BEEN PLAYING FAVORITES LATELY!
PLOD PLOD
THIS IS NO ORDINARY RESEARCH JAUNT, YOU KNOW.
THERE'S A PARTICULAR WOMAN I WANT TO COVER, SO WE NEED TO FIND HER.
WELL... UH... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS NICELY, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT YOU'RE CUT OUT FOR THAT MOVE...
BESIDES, THIS WOMAN, SHE'S A REAL LOOKER... I KNOW YOU'LL WANT TO MEET HER!
LOOK PERVY SAGE, WHAT YOU DO ON YOUR TIME IS YOUR BUSINESS! BUT I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN CHASE YOUR WOMEN!
*SIGH...* ...I KNOW THIS REAL COOL JUTSU... THAT'S SO MUCH MIGHTIER THAN THE CHIDORI...
NO, NO THANKS!!
OH WELL, MAYBE I'LL ASK SASUKE TO TAG ALONG.


OH! OH!
FAWIP
I'LL GO! I'LL GO!!
JUST LET ME GO PACK SOME STUFF! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK...!
DON'T YOU DARE LEAVE WITHOUT ME, PERVY SAGE!!
WHIZZZ
...HEH HEH... KNUCKLEHEAD...
STILL, YOU CAN'T HELP LIKING HIM...

READ THIS WAY


SNAP
ALL RIGHT--!! I'M GOING TO GO LEARN SOME NEW JUTSU AND BLOW SASUKE AND MASTER KAKASHI AWAY!
THEN SAKURA'LL FALL FOR ME TOO!! I BET...!!
LET'S GO!!!
KREEE...
UNNH...
YOU'RE A LITTLE TOO ENTHUSIASTIC, KID...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE HOLING UP IN SOME MOUNTAIN FOR A FEW MONTHS...

# MEET KISHIMOTO'S ASSISTANTS PART SEVEN

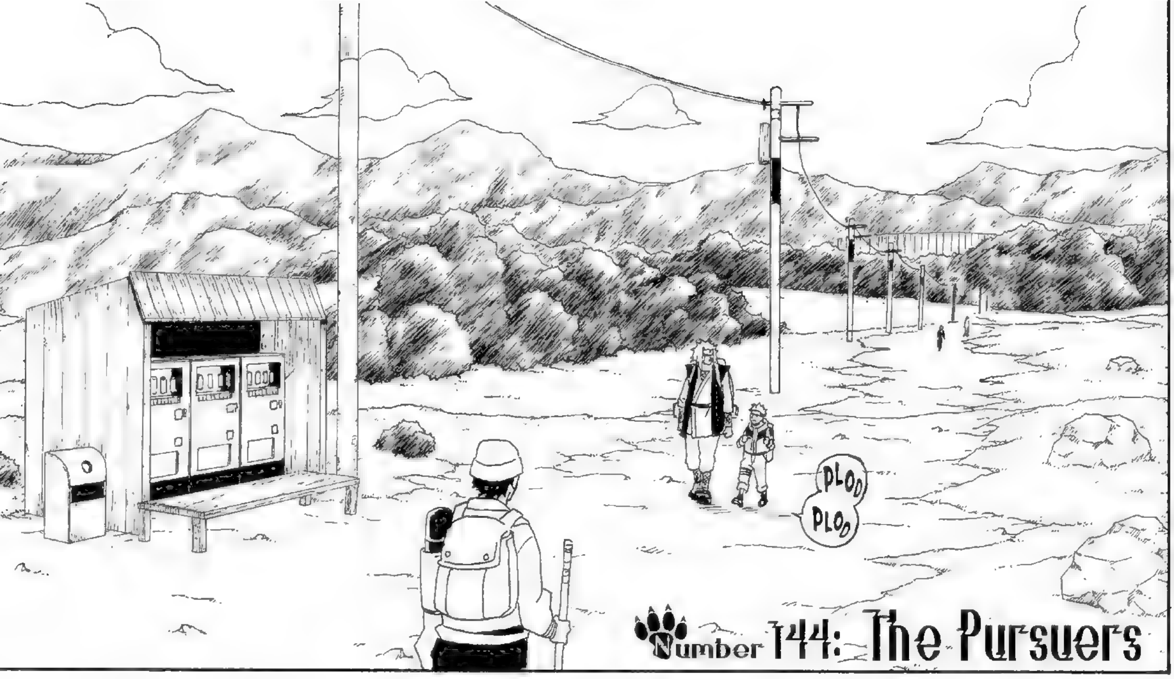
YET ANOTHER NEW, YOUNG ASSISTANT HAS JOINED OUR NARUTO STAFF. AS ALWAYS, WE'LL BE INTRODUCING HIM HERE.

## ASSISTANT NO. 7: OHKUBO AKIRA

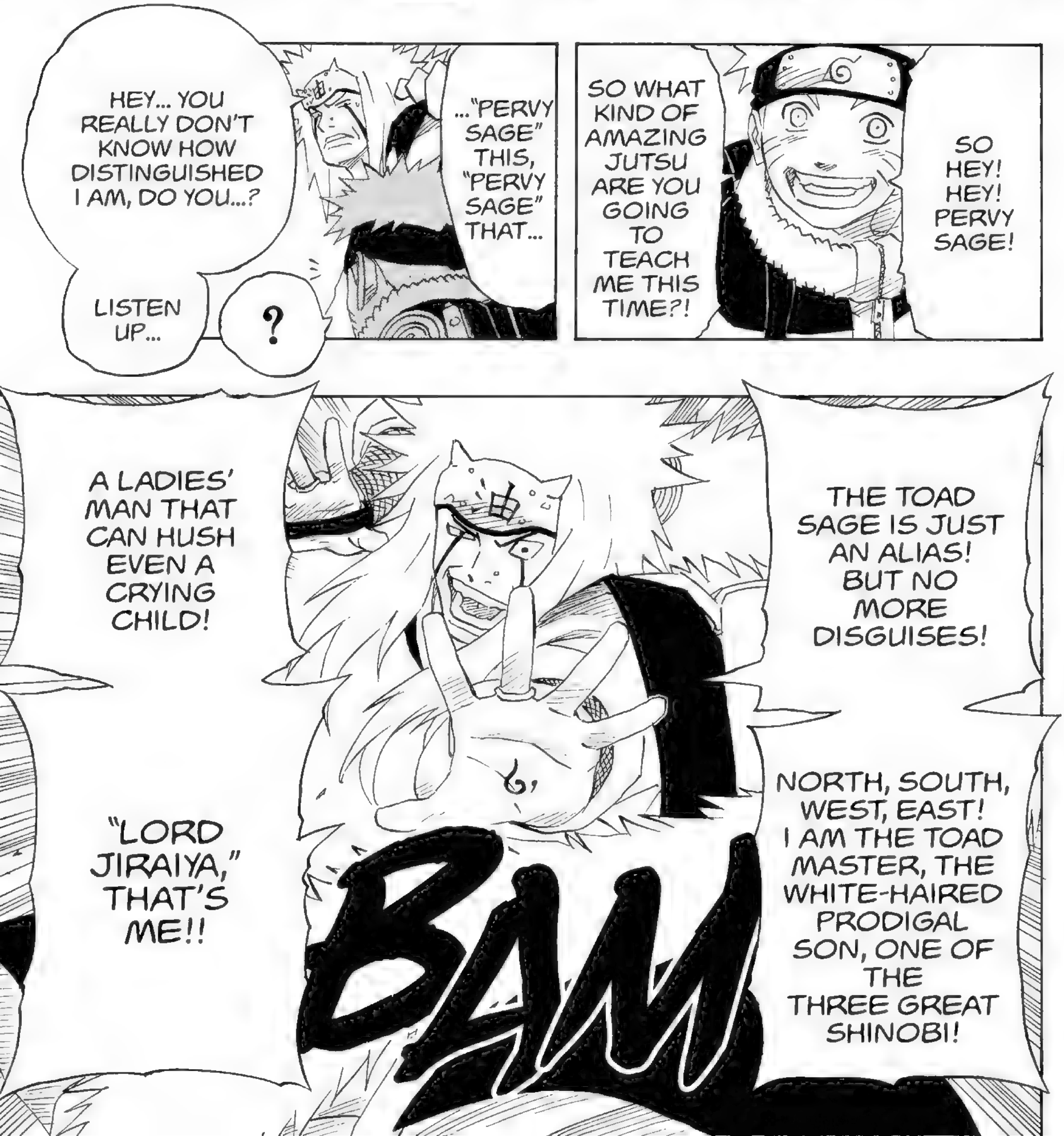
### PROFILE

- STILL FRESHLY SCRUBBED, YOUNG AND SPRIGHTLY.
- NO MATTER HOW STARTLED, MANAGES TO SAY "WOW" IN A NORMAL TONE OF VOICE.
- PRETTY SHARP-EYED.
- HAS BAGS UNDER HIS EYES.
- A SOCCER LAD WHO IS OBSESSED WITH SOCCER.
- MANLY IN A CASUAL WAY.

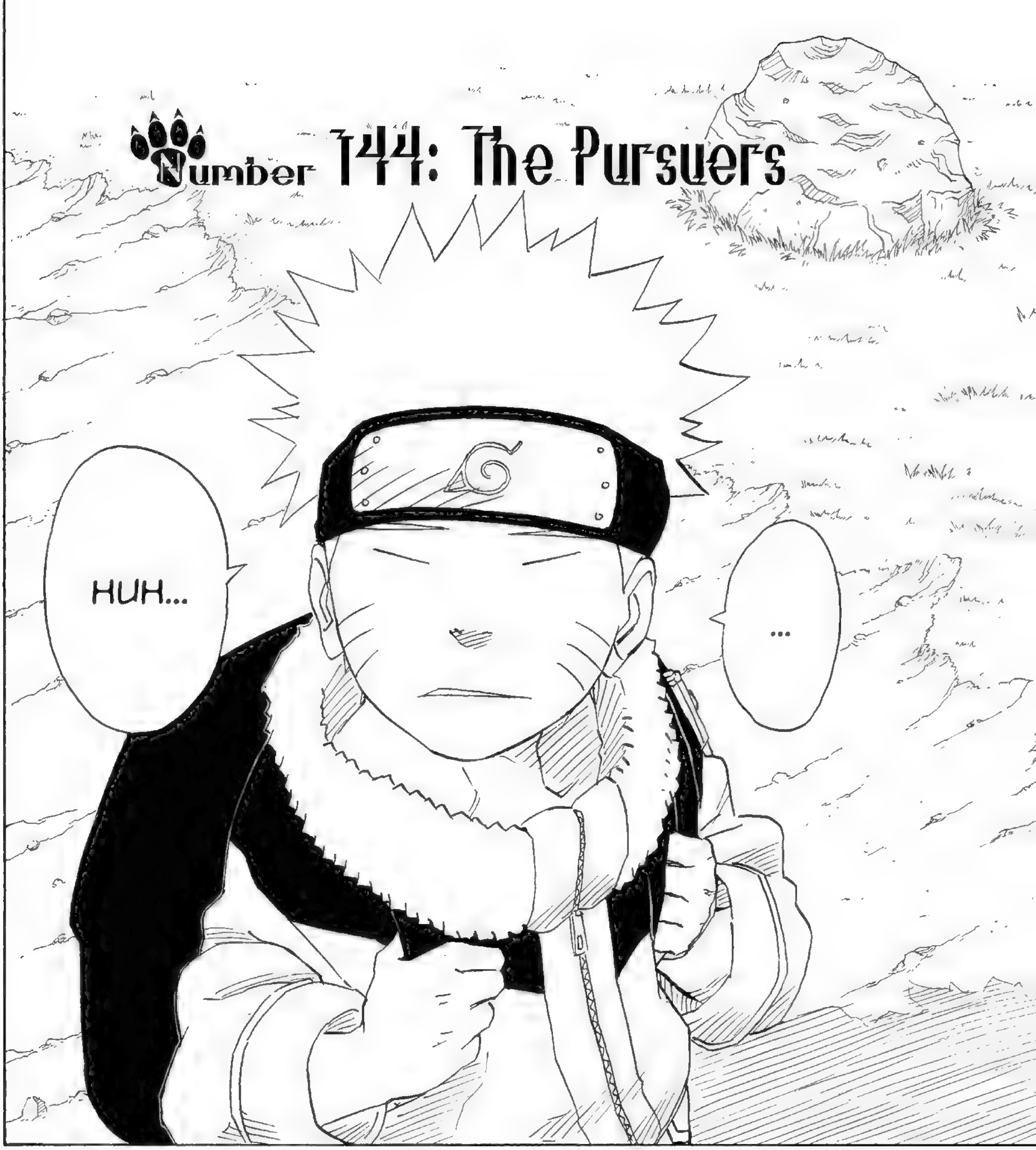
JOB: BETA [THE ARTIST THAT SPOTS THE SOLID BLACKS IN HAIR AND CLOTHING], TONING, AND BACKGROUNDS.



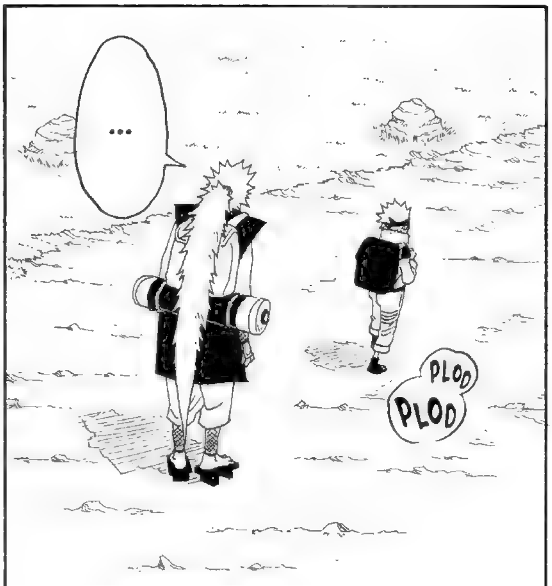
# Number 144: The Pursuers

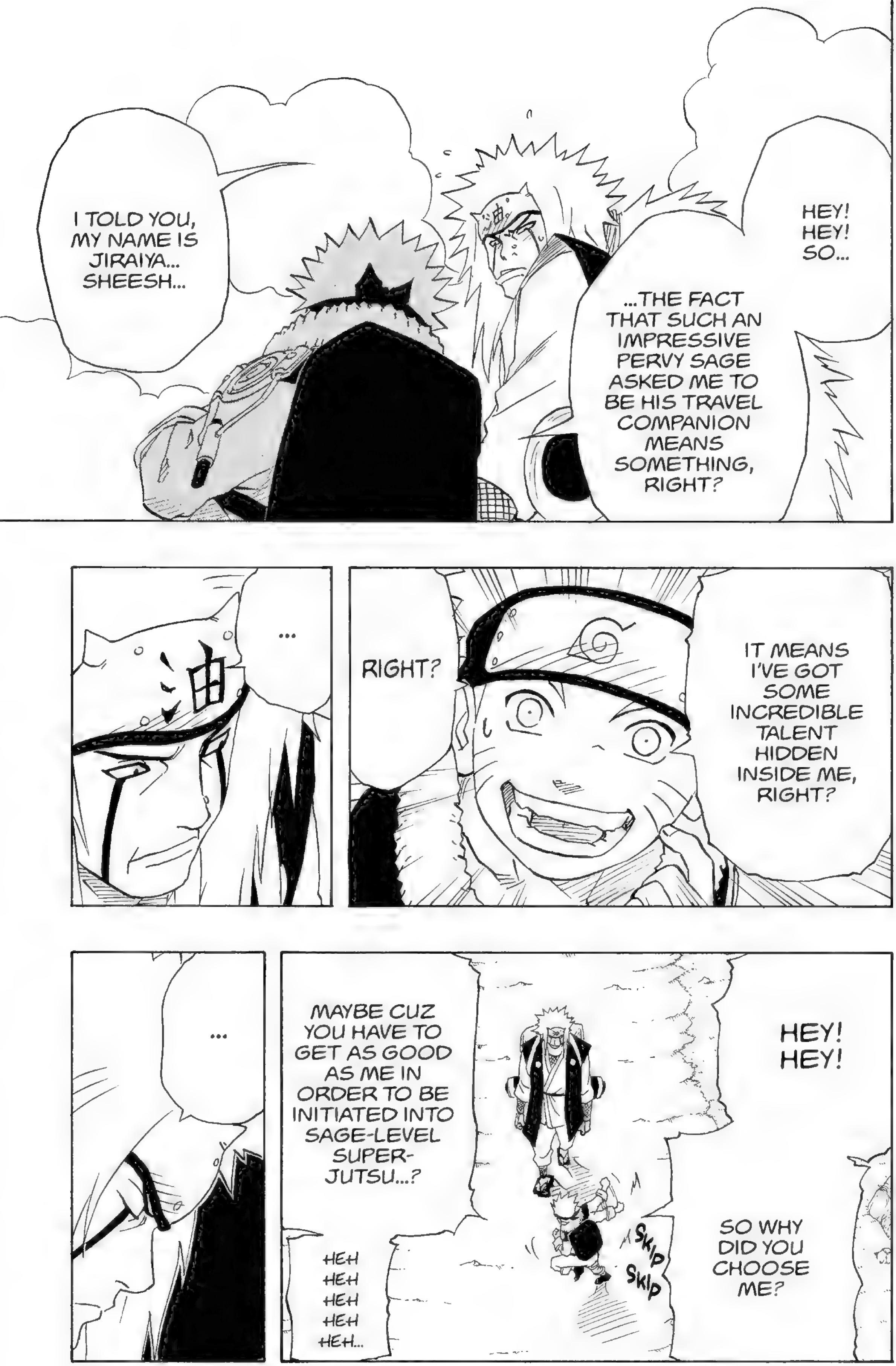

SO HEY! HEY! PERVY SAGE!
SO WHAT KIND OF AMAZING JUTSU ARE YOU GOING TO TEACH ME THIS TIME?!
..."PERVY SAGE" THIS, "PERVY SAGE" THAT...
HEY... YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW DISTINGUISHED I AM, DO YOU...?
?
LISTEN UP...
THE TOAD SAGE IS JUST AN ALIAS! BUT NO MORE DISGUISES!
A LADIES' MAN THAT CAN HUSH EVEN A CRYING CHILD!
NORTH, SOUTH, WEST, EAST! I AM THE TOAD MASTER, THE WHITE-HAIRED PRODIGAL SON, ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI!
"LORD JIRAIYA," THAT'S ME!!
BAM

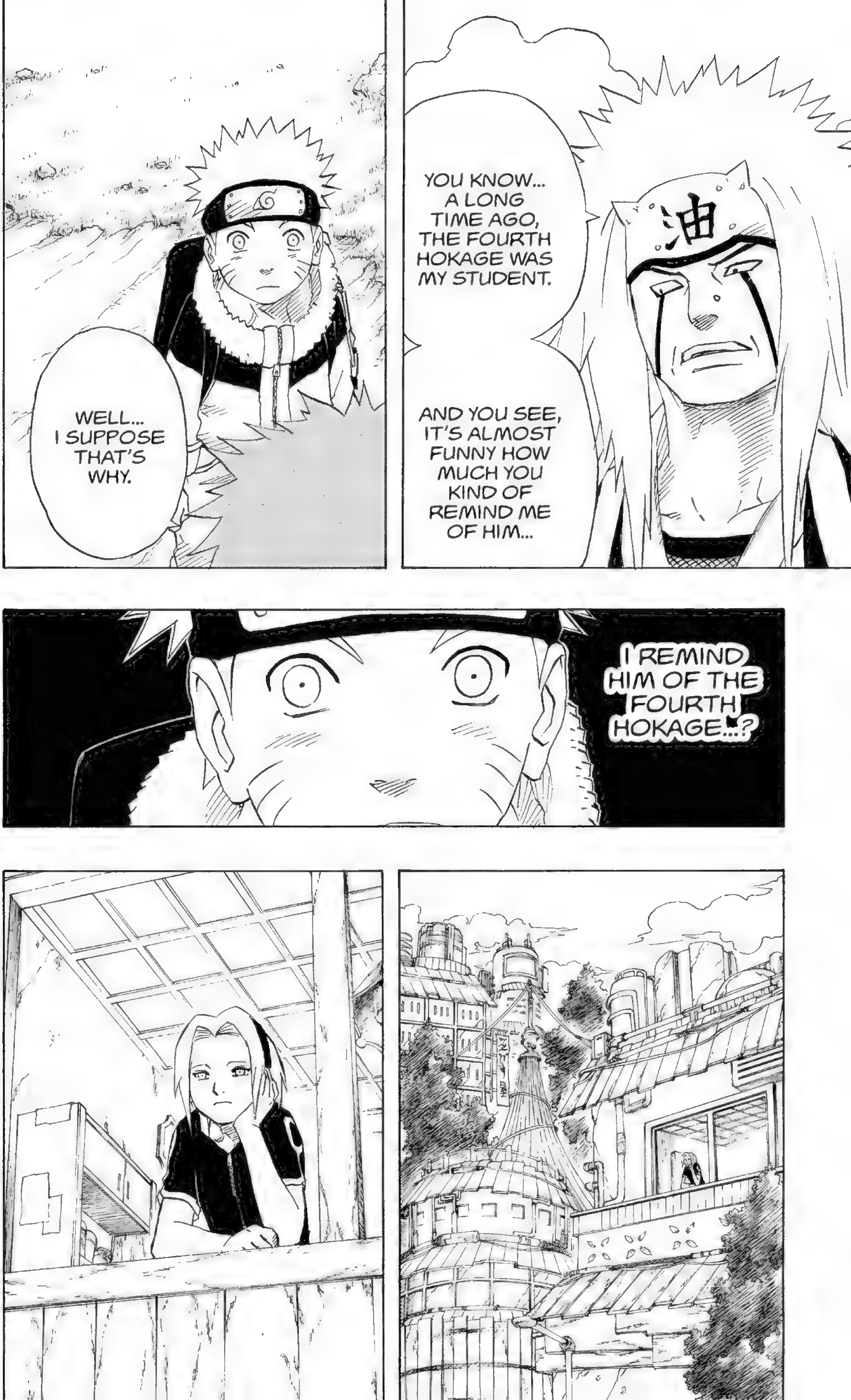
# Number 144: The Pursuers

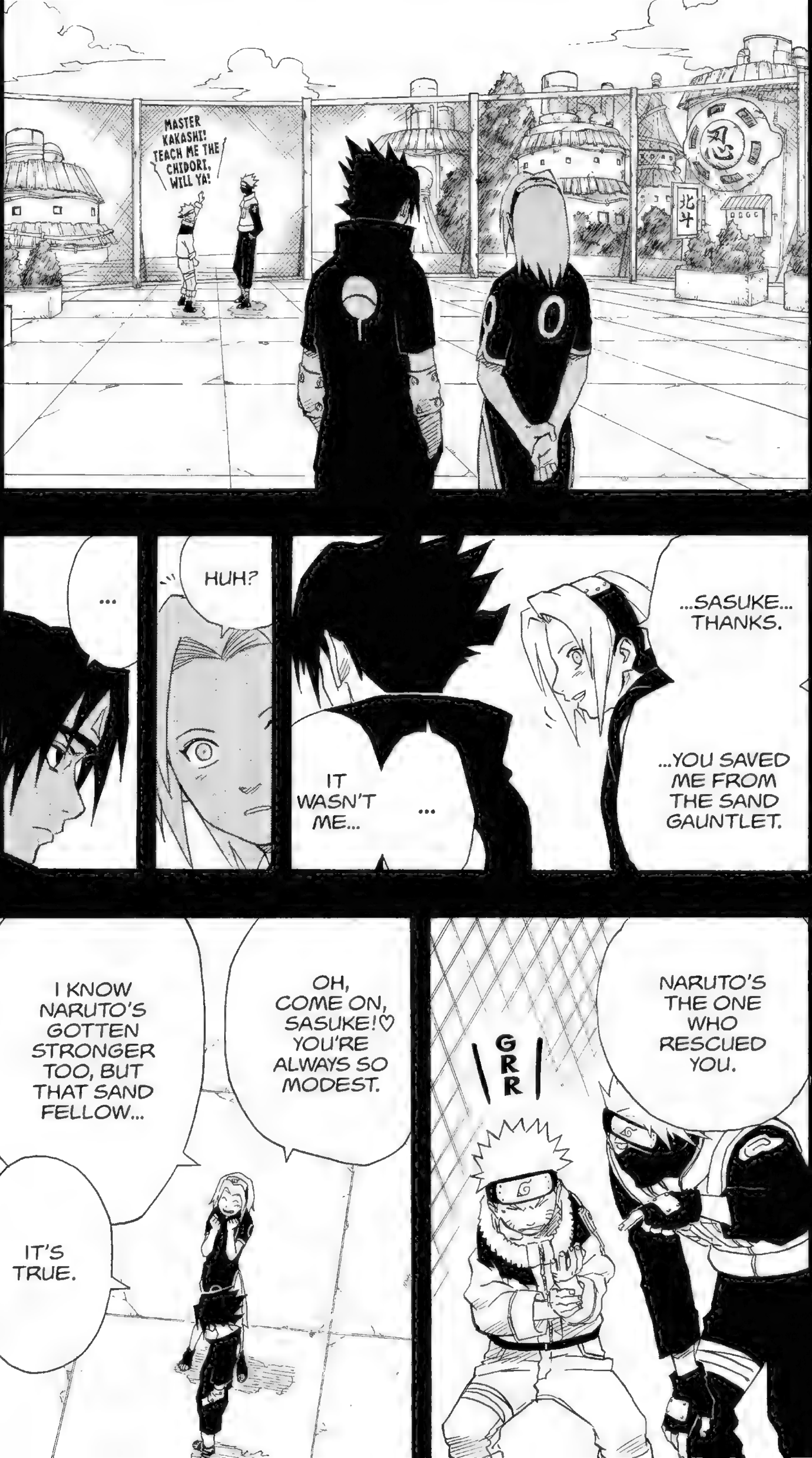


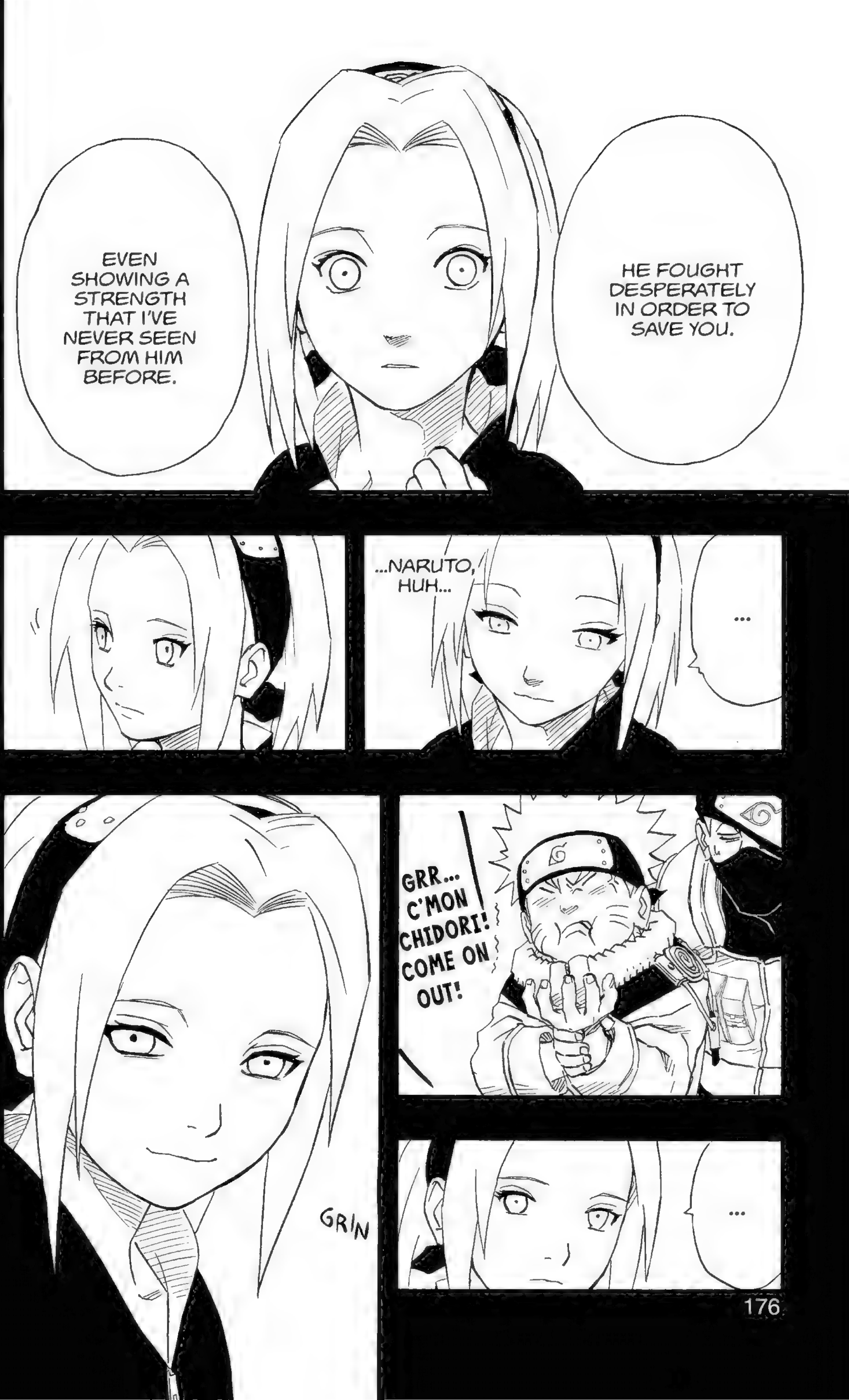
CHIRP
CHIRP



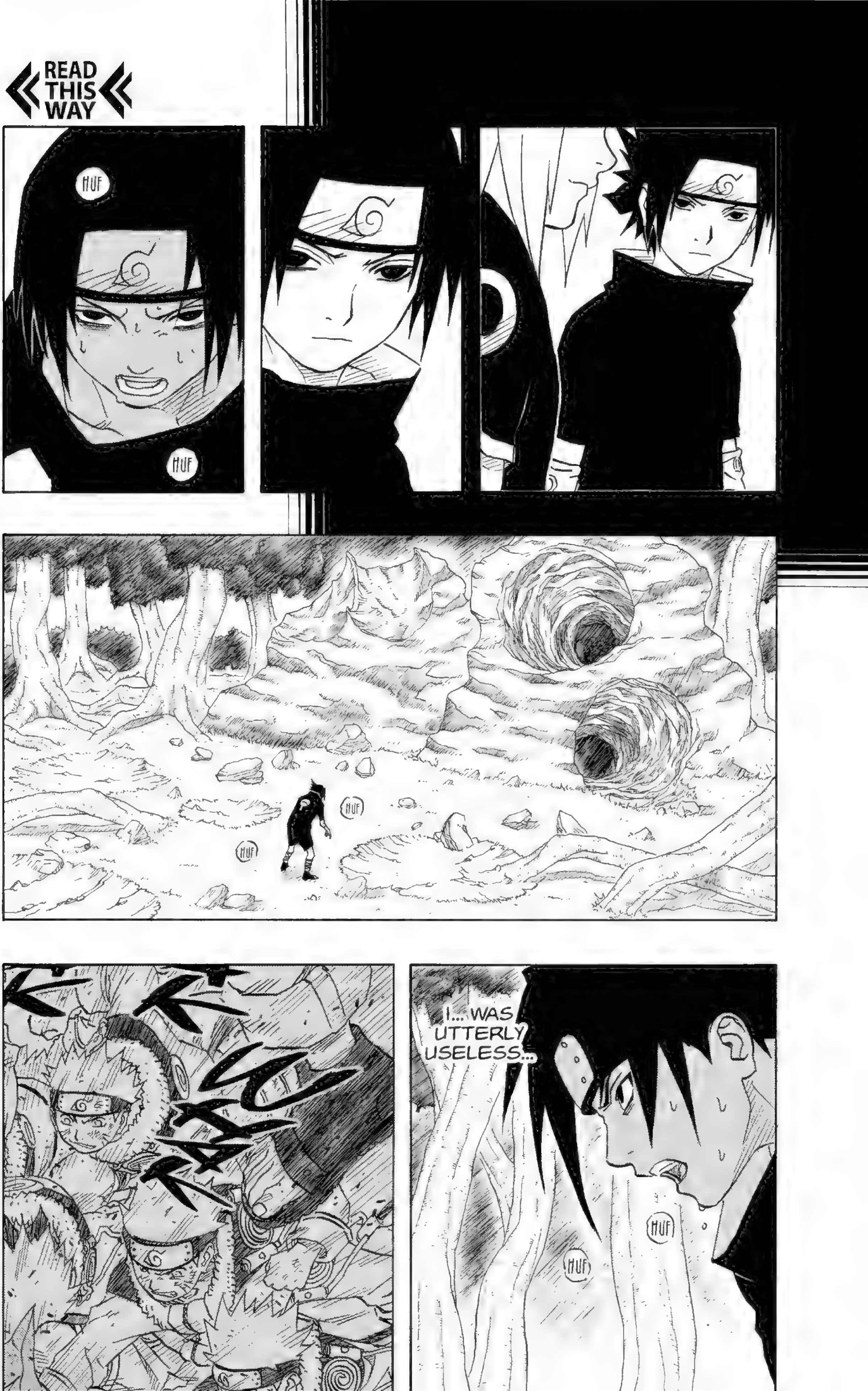

HEY! HEY! SO...
...THE FACT THAT SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE PERVY SAGE ASKED ME TO BE HIS TRAVEL COMPANION MEANS SOMETHING, RIGHT?
I TOLD YOU, MY NAME IS JIRAIYA... SHEESH...
IT MEANS I'VE GOT SOME INCREDIBLE TALENT HIDDEN INSIDE ME, RIGHT?
RIGHT?
...
HEY! HEY!
SO WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ME?
SKIP SKIP
MAYBE CUZ YOU HAVE TO GET AS GOOD AS ME IN ORDER TO BE INITIATED INTO SAGE-LEVEL SUPER-JUTSU...?
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...
...

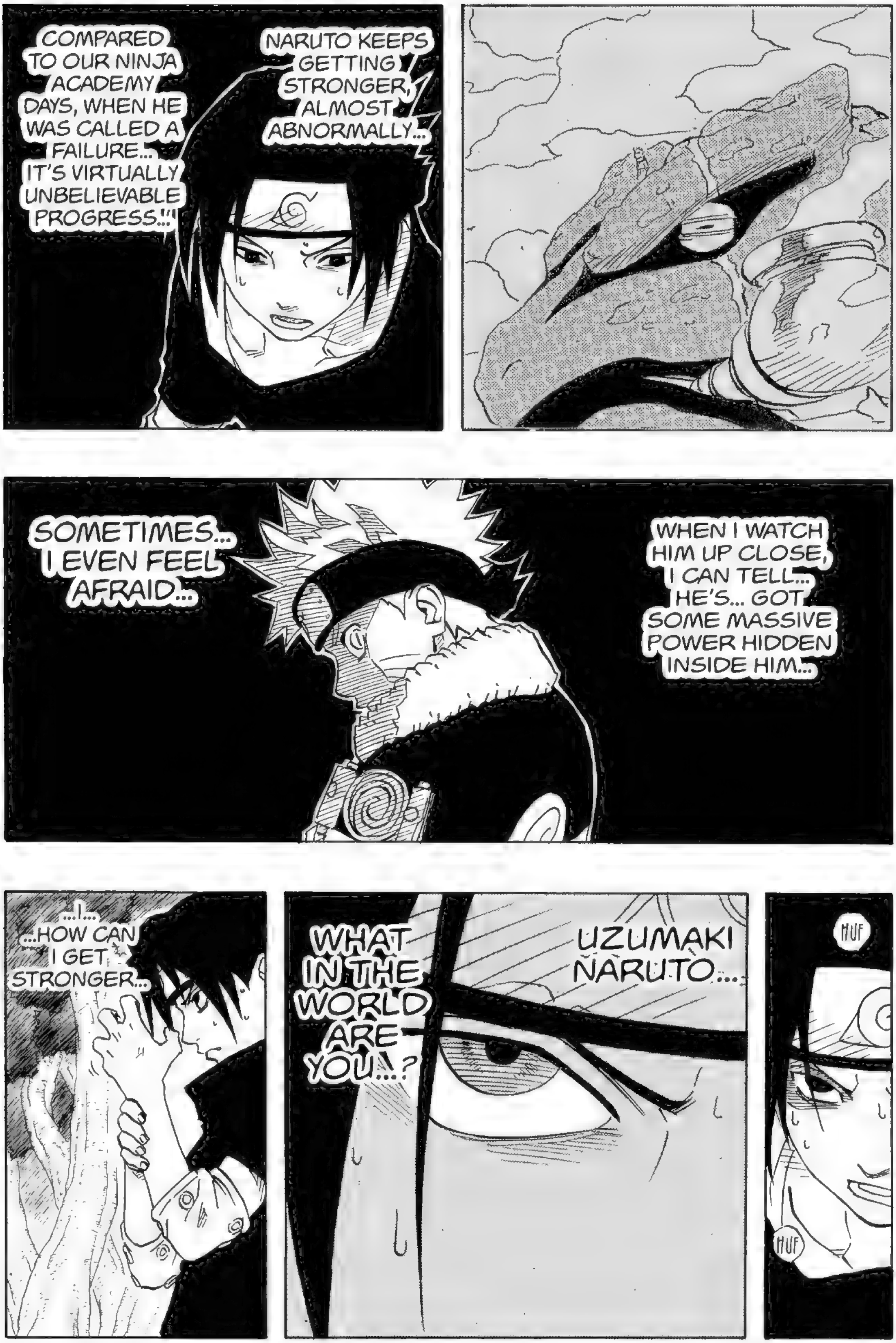

YOU KNOW... A LONG TIME AGO, THE FOURTH HOKAGE WAS MY STUDENT.
AND YOU SEE, IT'S ALMOST FUNNY HOW MUCH YOU KIND OF REMIND ME OF HIM...
油
WELL... I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHY.
I REMIND HIM OF THE FOURTH HOKAGE...?

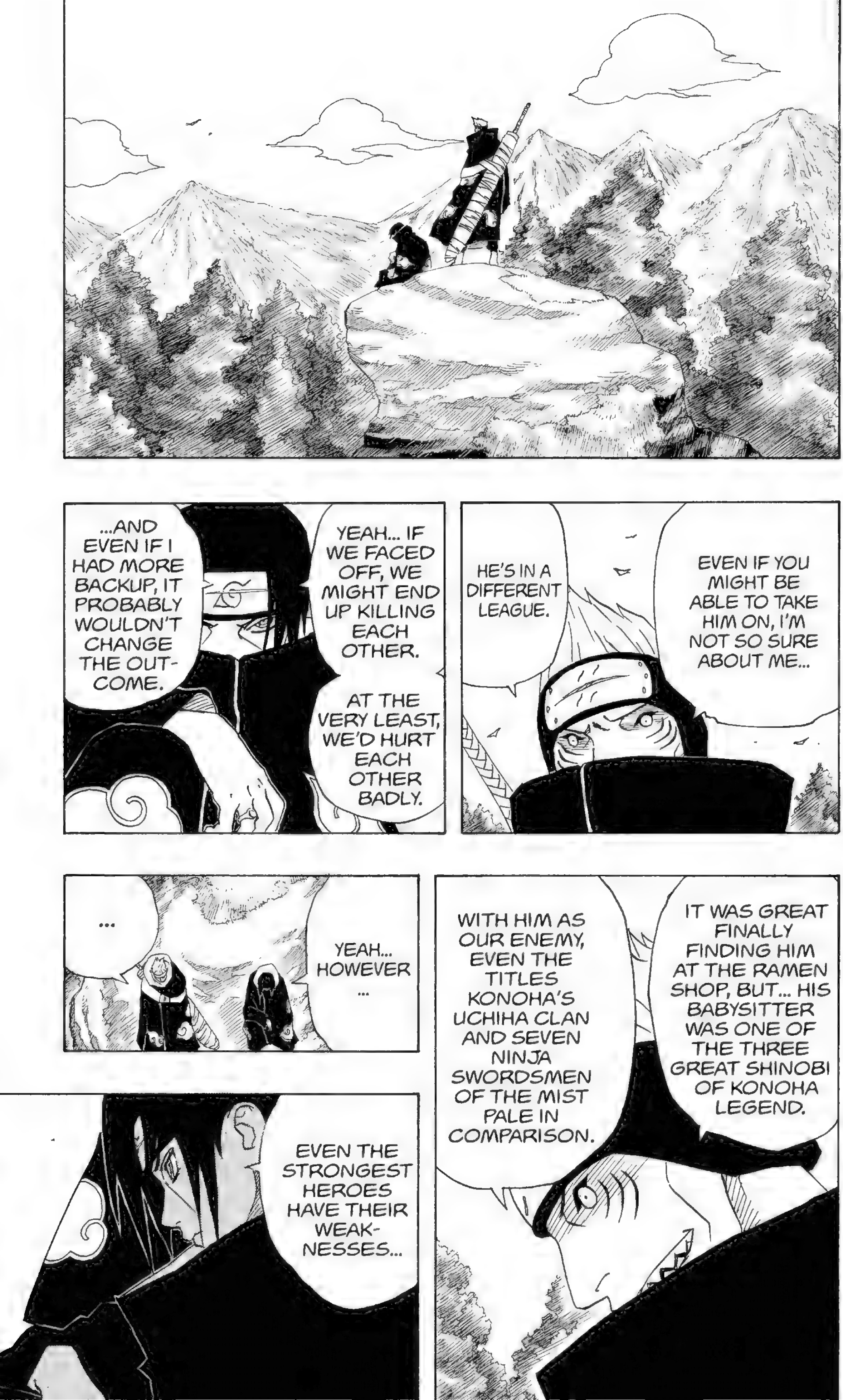

MASTER KAKASHI! TEACH ME THE CHIDORI, WILL YA!
...SASUKE... THANKS.
...YOU SAVED ME FROM THE SAND GAUNTLET.
IT WASN'T ME...
...
HUH?
...
NARUTO'S THE ONE WHO RESCUED YOU.
GRR
OH, COME ON, SASUKE!♡ YOU'RE ALWAYS SO MODEST.
I KNOW NARUTO'S GOTTEN STRONGER TOO, BUT THAT SAND FELLOW...
IT'S TRUE.

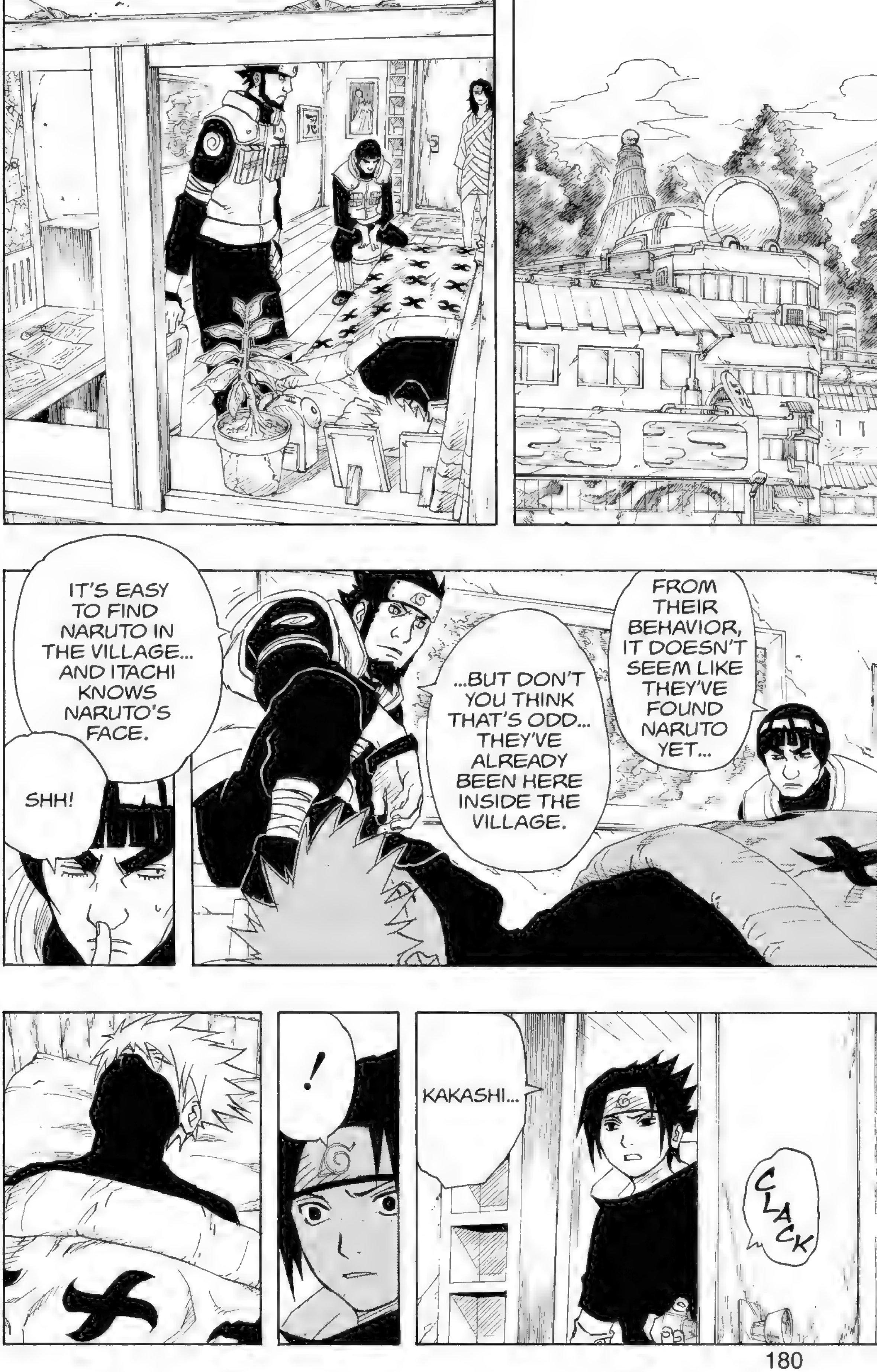

HE FOUGHT DESPERATELY IN ORDER TO SAVE YOU.
EVEN SHOWING A STRENGTH THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN FROM HIM BEFORE.
...
...NARUTO, HUH...
GRR... C'MON CHIDORI! COME ON OUT!
...
GRIN

READ THIS WAY

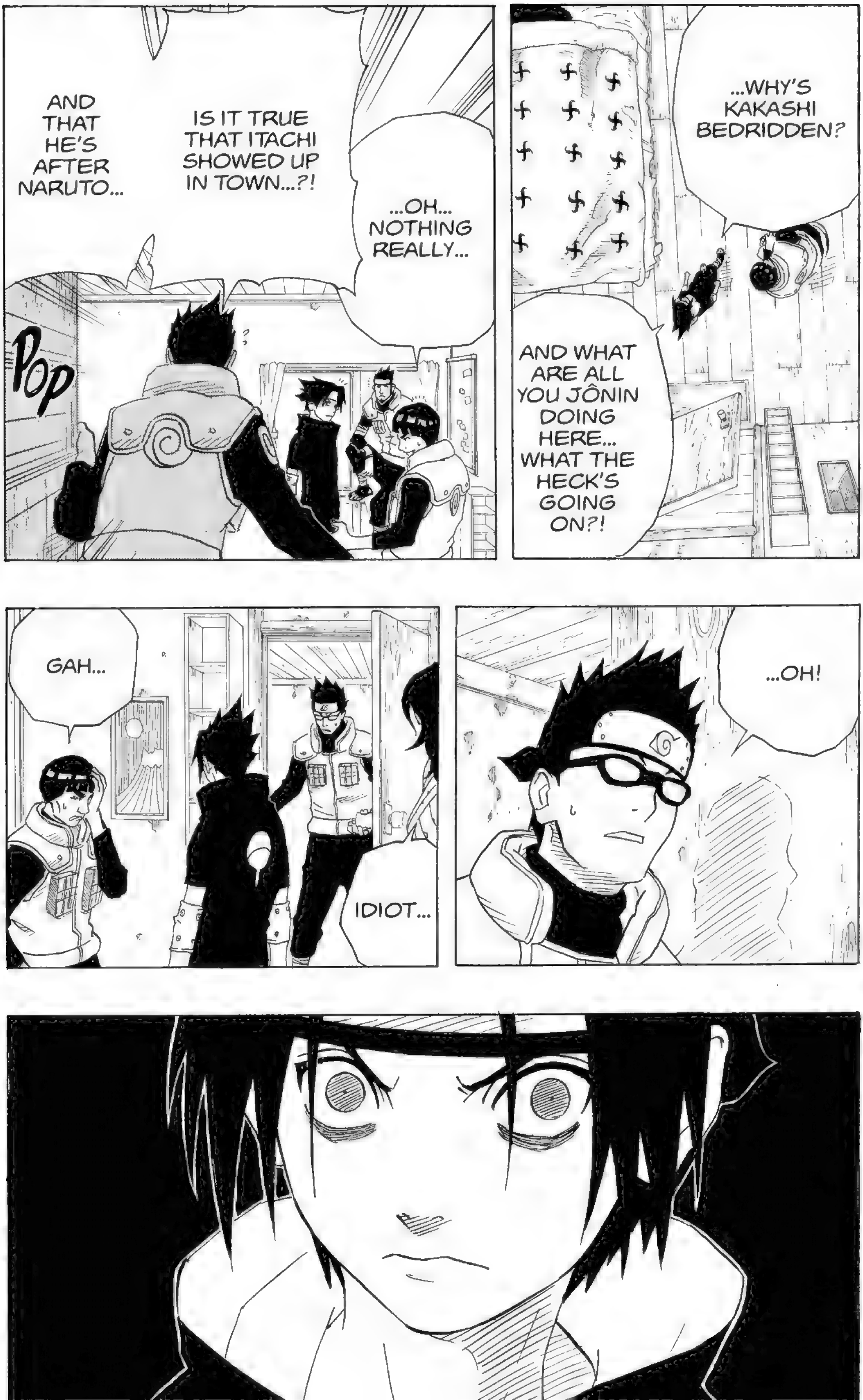

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I... WAS UTTERLY USELESS...
HUF
HUF

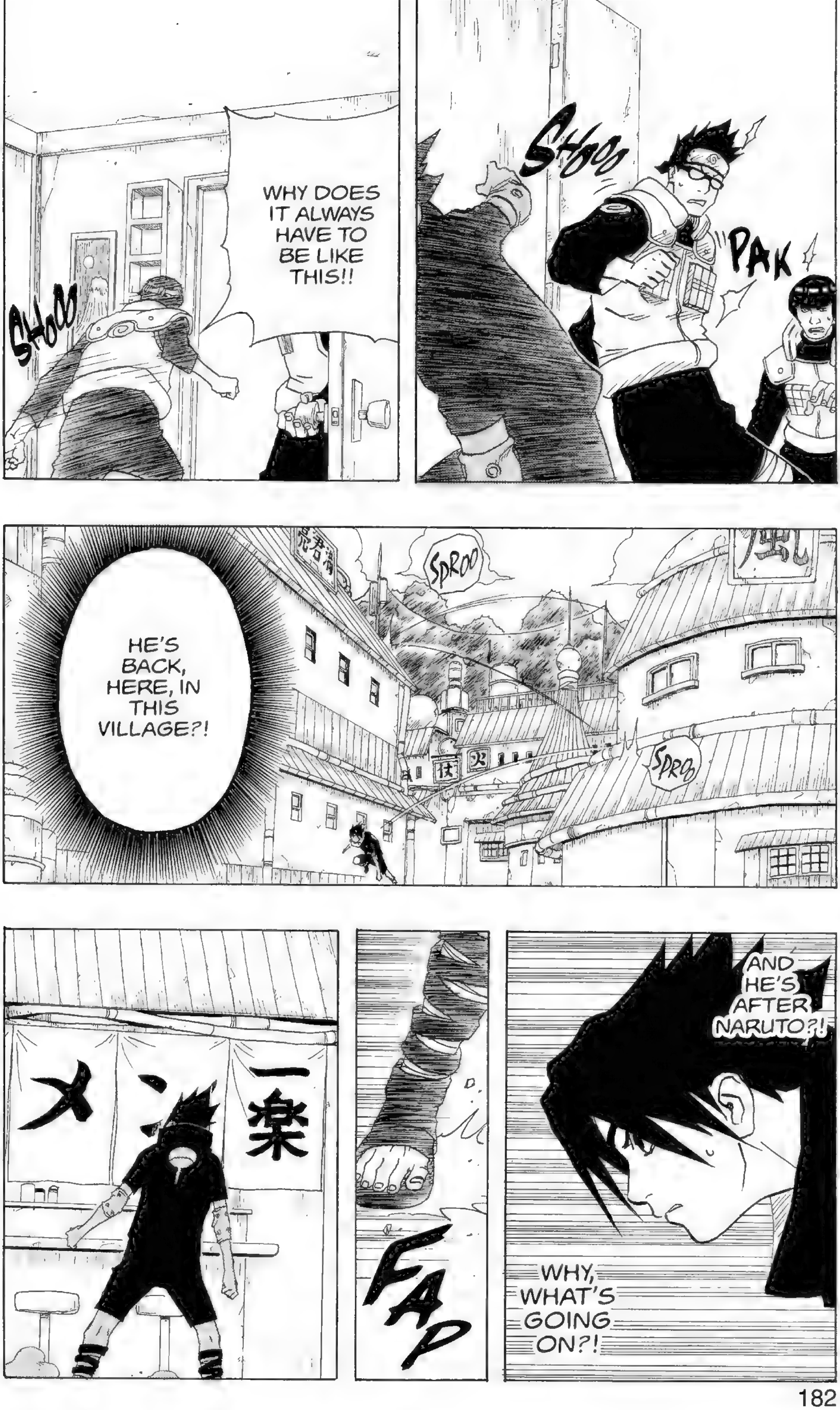

NARUTO KEEPS GETTING STRONGER, ALMOST ABNORMALLY...
COMPARED TO OUR NINJA ACADEMY DAYS, WHEN HE WAS CALLED A FAILURE... IT'S VIRTUALLY UNBELIEVABLE PROGRESS...!!
WHEN I WATCH HIM UP CLOSE, I CAN TELL... HE'S... GOT SOME MASSIVE POWER HIDDEN INSIDE HIM...
SOMETIMES... I EVEN FEEL AFRAID...
HUF
HUF
UZUMAKI NARUTO...
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU...?
...I...
...HOW CAN I GET STRONGER...

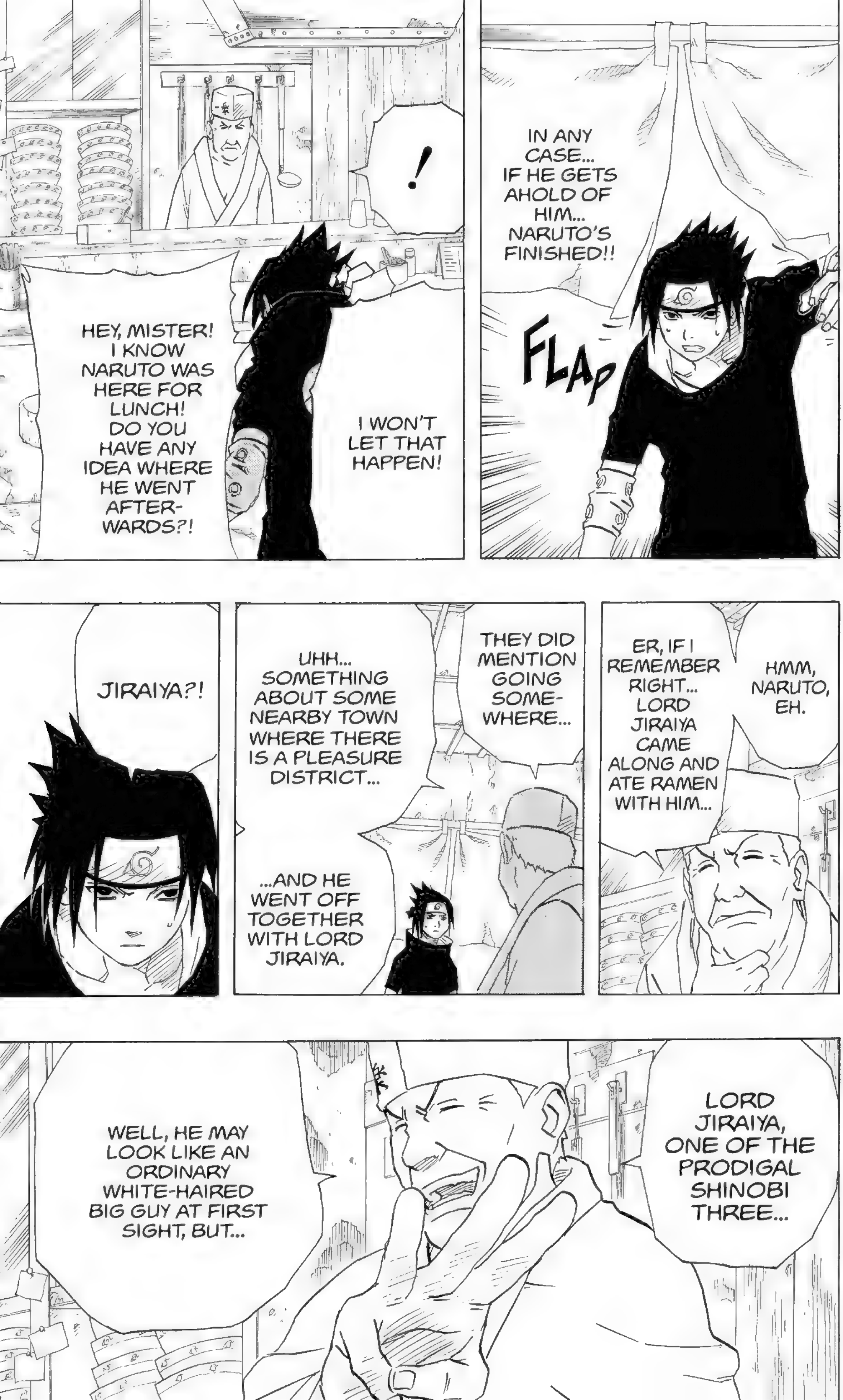

EVEN IF YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM ON, I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT ME...
HE'S IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE.
YEAH... IF WE FACED OFF, WE MIGHT END UP KILLING EACH OTHER.
AT THE VERY LEAST, WE'D HURT EACH OTHER BADLY.
...AND EVEN IF I HAD MORE BACKUP, IT PROBABLY WOULDN'T CHANGE THE OUTCOME.
IT WAS GREAT FINALLY FINDING HIM AT THE RAMEN SHOP, BUT... HIS BABYSITTER WAS ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI OF KONOHA LEGEND.
WITH HIM AS OUR ENEMY, EVEN THE TITLES KONOHA'S UCHIHA CLAN AND SEVEN NINJA SWORDSMEN OF THE MIST PALE IN COMPARISON.
YEAH... HOWEVER ...
...
EVEN THE STRONGEST HEROES HAVE THEIR WEAKNESSES...

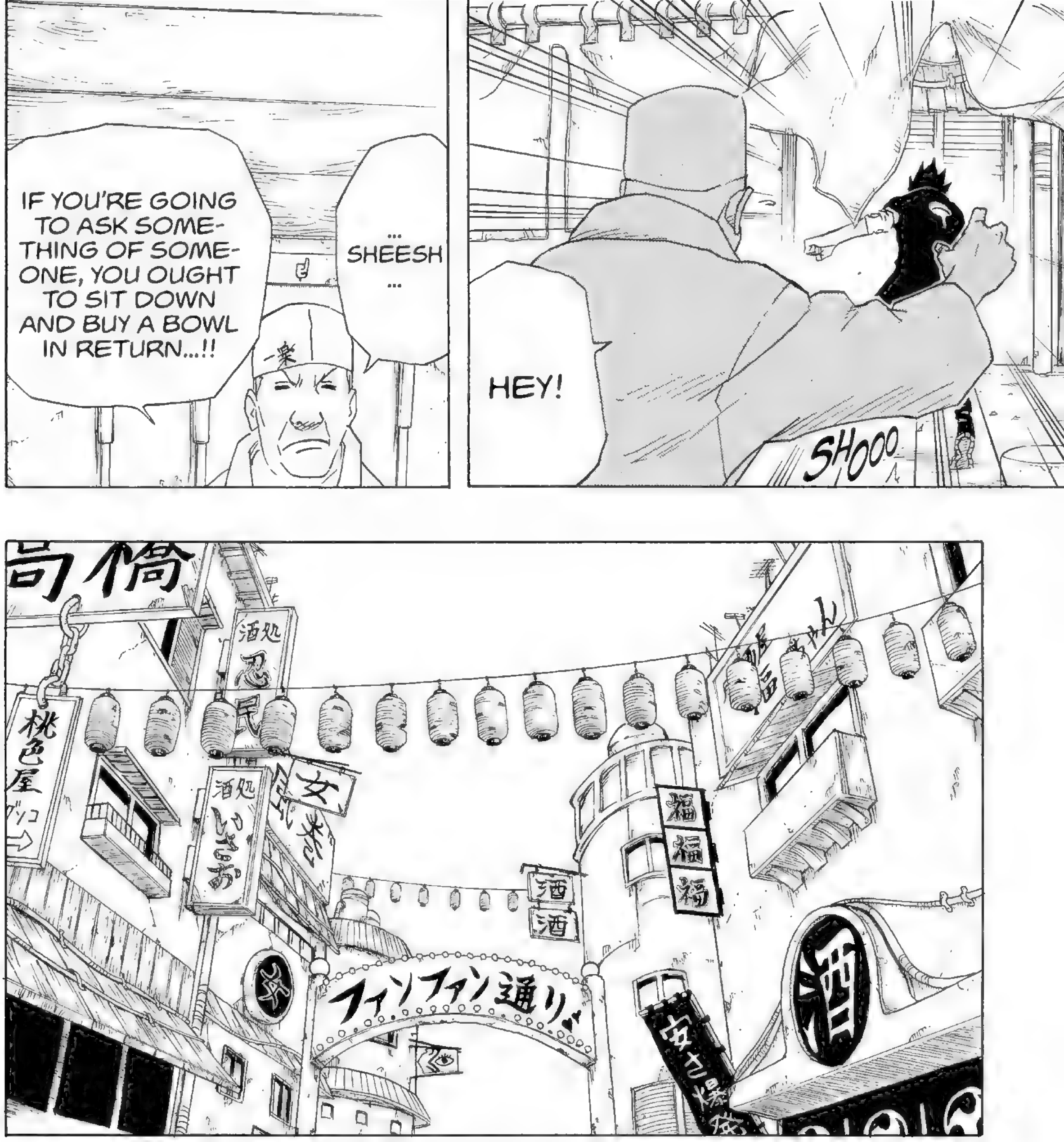

FROM THEIR BEHAVIOR, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THEY'VE FOUND NARUTO YET...
...BUT DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S ODD... THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN HERE INSIDE THE VILLAGE.
IT'S EASY TO FIND NARUTO IN THE VILLAGE... AND ITACHI KNOWS NARUTO'S FACE.
SHH!
CLACK
KAKASHI...
!

READ THIS WAY

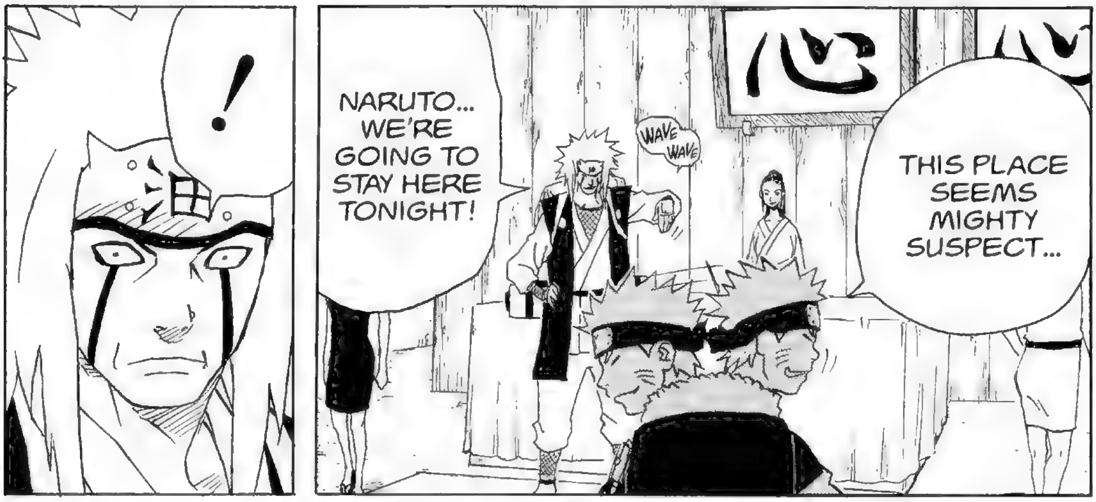

...WHY'S KAKASHI BEDRIDDEN?
AND WHAT ARE ALL YOU JÔNIN DOING HERE... WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON?!
...OH... NOTHING REALLY...
IS IT TRUE THAT ITACHI SHOWED UP IN TOWN...?!
AND THAT HE'S AFTER NARUTO...
POP
...OH!
GAH...
IDIOT...


SHOOO
PAK
WHY DOES IT ALWAYS HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS!!
SHOOO
SPROO
SPROO
HE'S BACK, HERE, IN THIS VILLAGE?!
AND HE'S AFTER NARUTO?!
WHY, WHAT'S GOING ON?!
FAP
一楽
メン

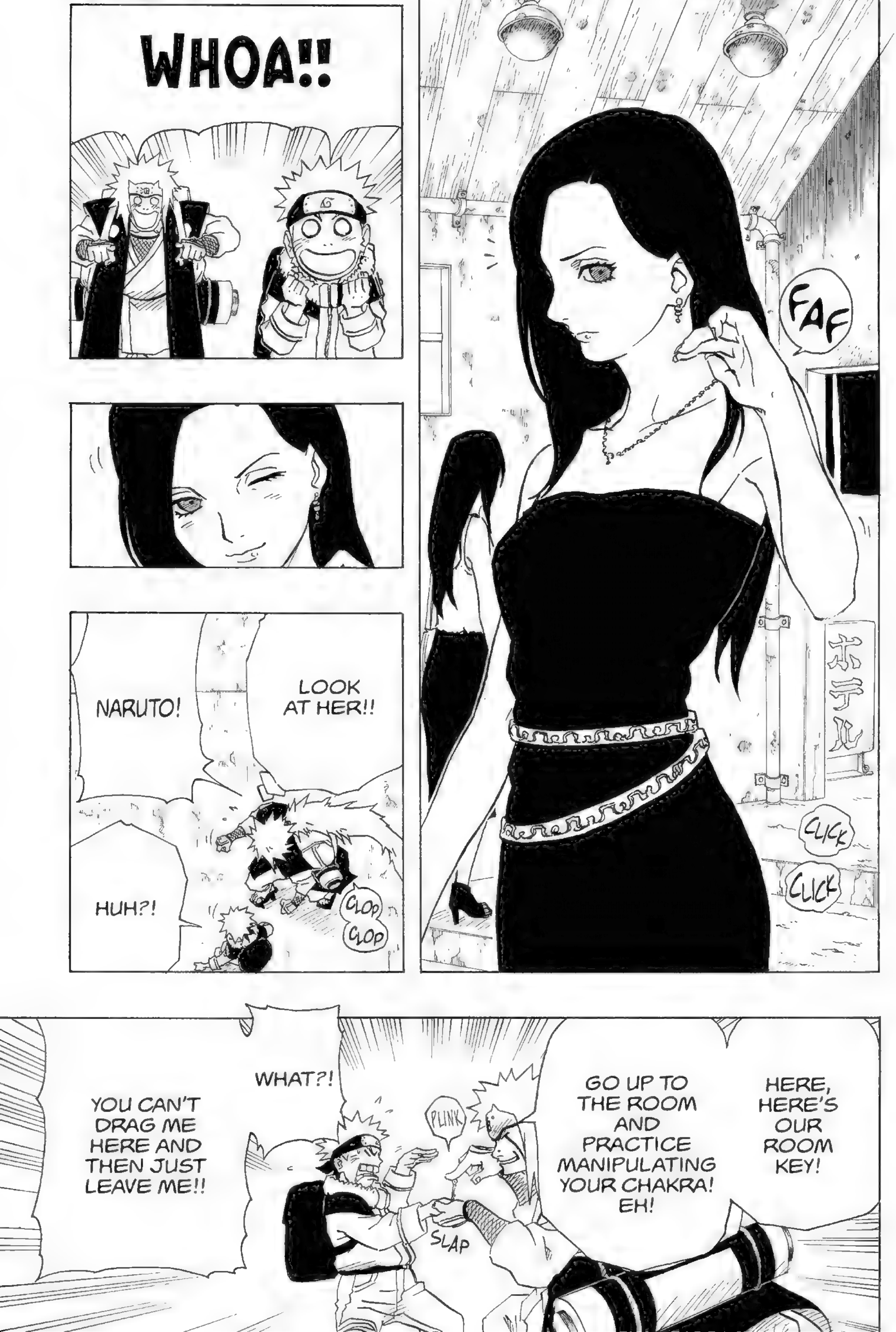

IN ANY CASE... IF HE GETS AHOLD OF HIM... NARUTO'S FINISHED!!
FLAP
!
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN!
HEY, MISTER! I KNOW NARUTO WAS HERE FOR LUNCH! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE HE WENT AFTERWARDS?!
HMM, NARUTO, EH.
ER, IF I REMEMBER RIGHT... LORD JIRAIYA CAME ALONG AND ATE RAMEN WITH HIM...
THEY DID MENTION GOING SOMEWHERE...
UHH... SOMETHING ABOUT SOME NEARBY TOWN WHERE THERE IS A PLEASURE DISTRICT...
...AND HE WENT OFF TOGETHER WITH LORD JIRAIYA.
JIRAIYA?!
LORD JIRAIYA, ONE OF THE PRODIGAL SHINOBI THREE...
WELL, HE MAY LOOK LIKE AN ORDINARY WHITE-HAIRED BIG GUY AT FIRST SIGHT, BUT...

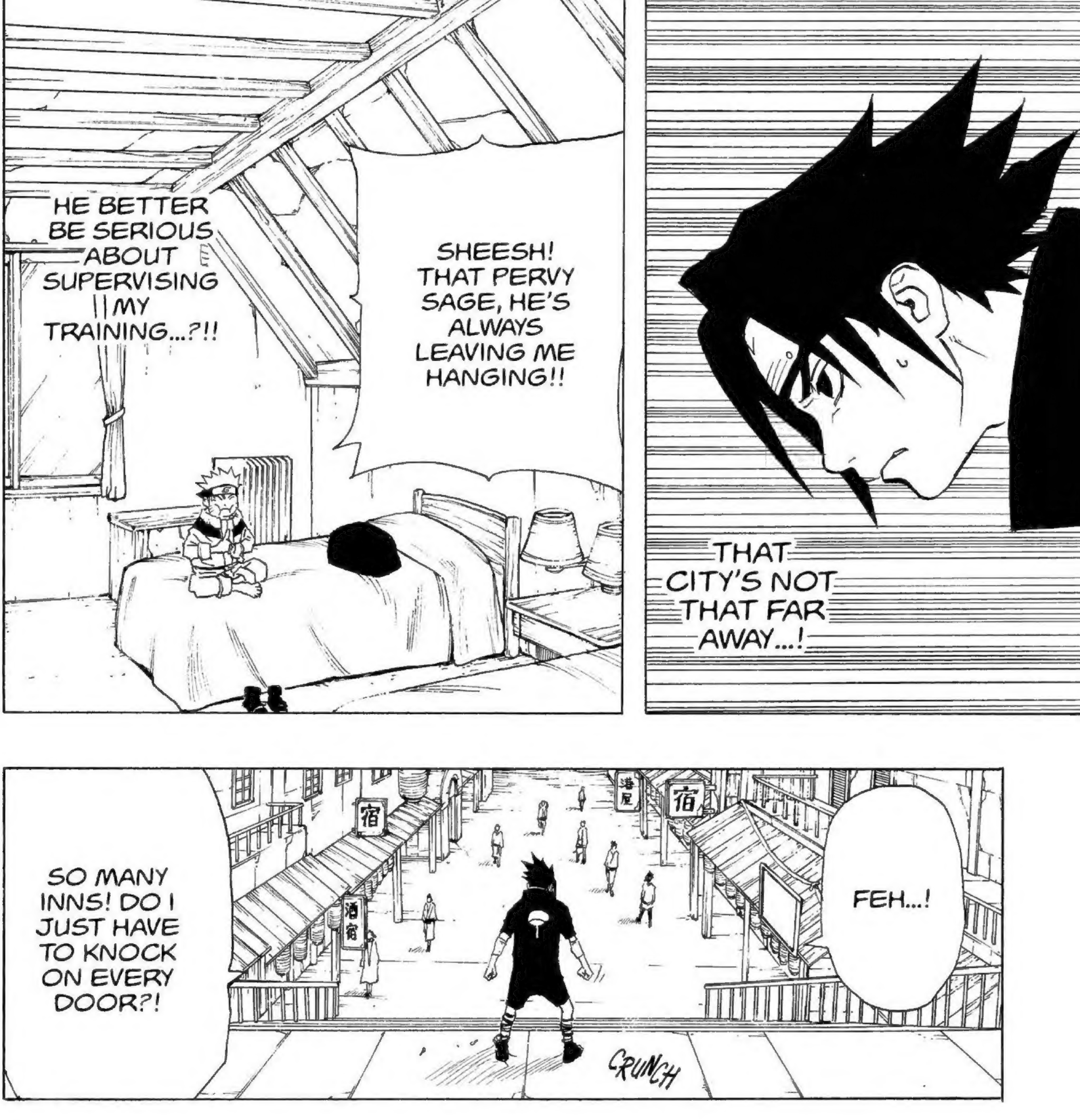

HEY!
SHOOO
... SHEESH ...
IF YOU'RE GOING TO ASK SOMETHING OF SOMEONE, YOU OUGHT TO SIT DOWN AND BUY A BOWL IN RETURN...!!
一楽
酒処 忍民
桃色屋
酒処 いさお
福福福
酒 酒
ファンファン通り♥
酒

(Street Sign: Fun Fun Avenue)


THIS PLACE SEEMS MIGHTY SUSPECT...
WAVE WAVE
NARUTO... WE'RE GOING TO STAY HERE TONIGHT!
心
!
油

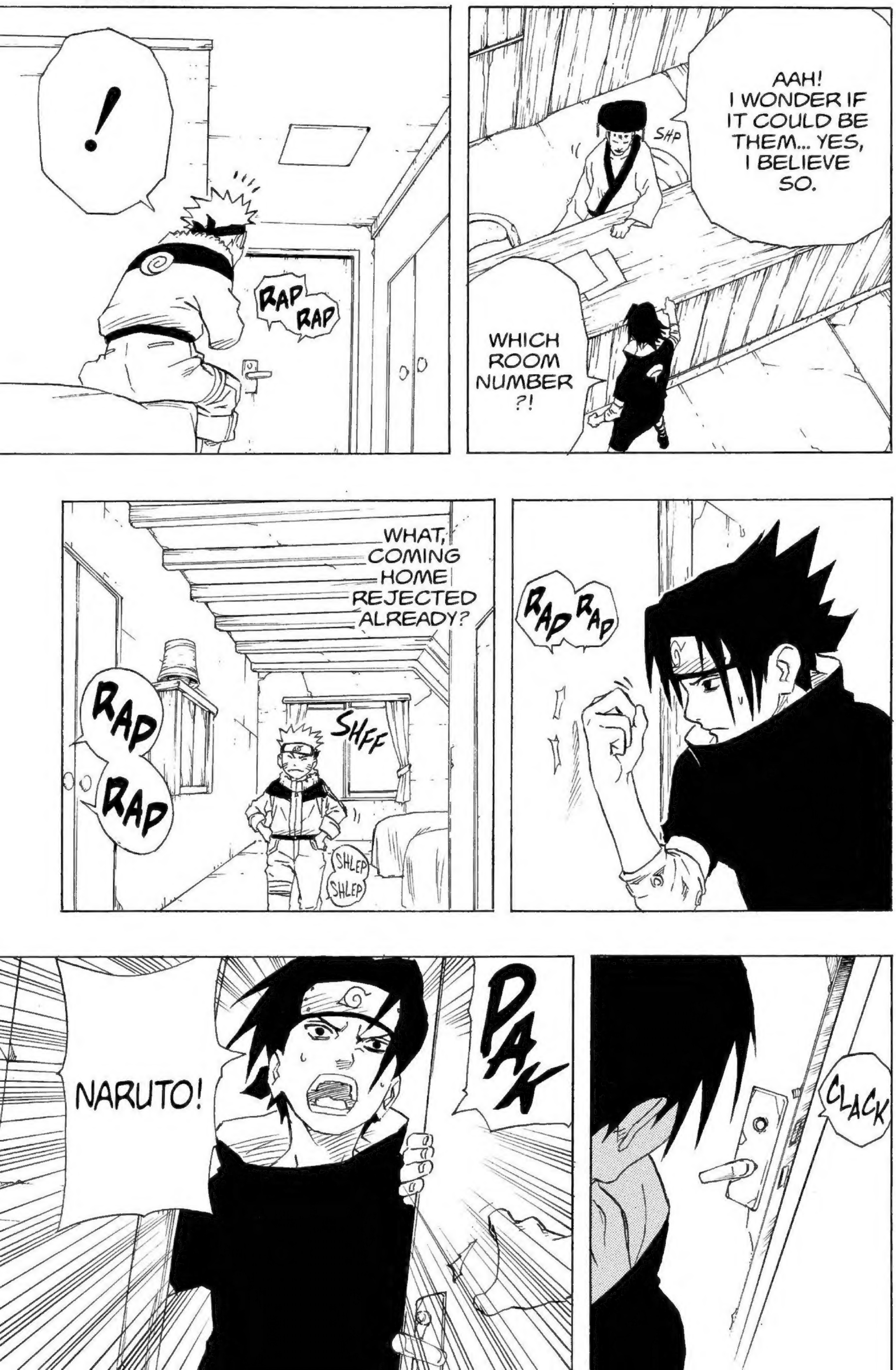
READ THIS WAY

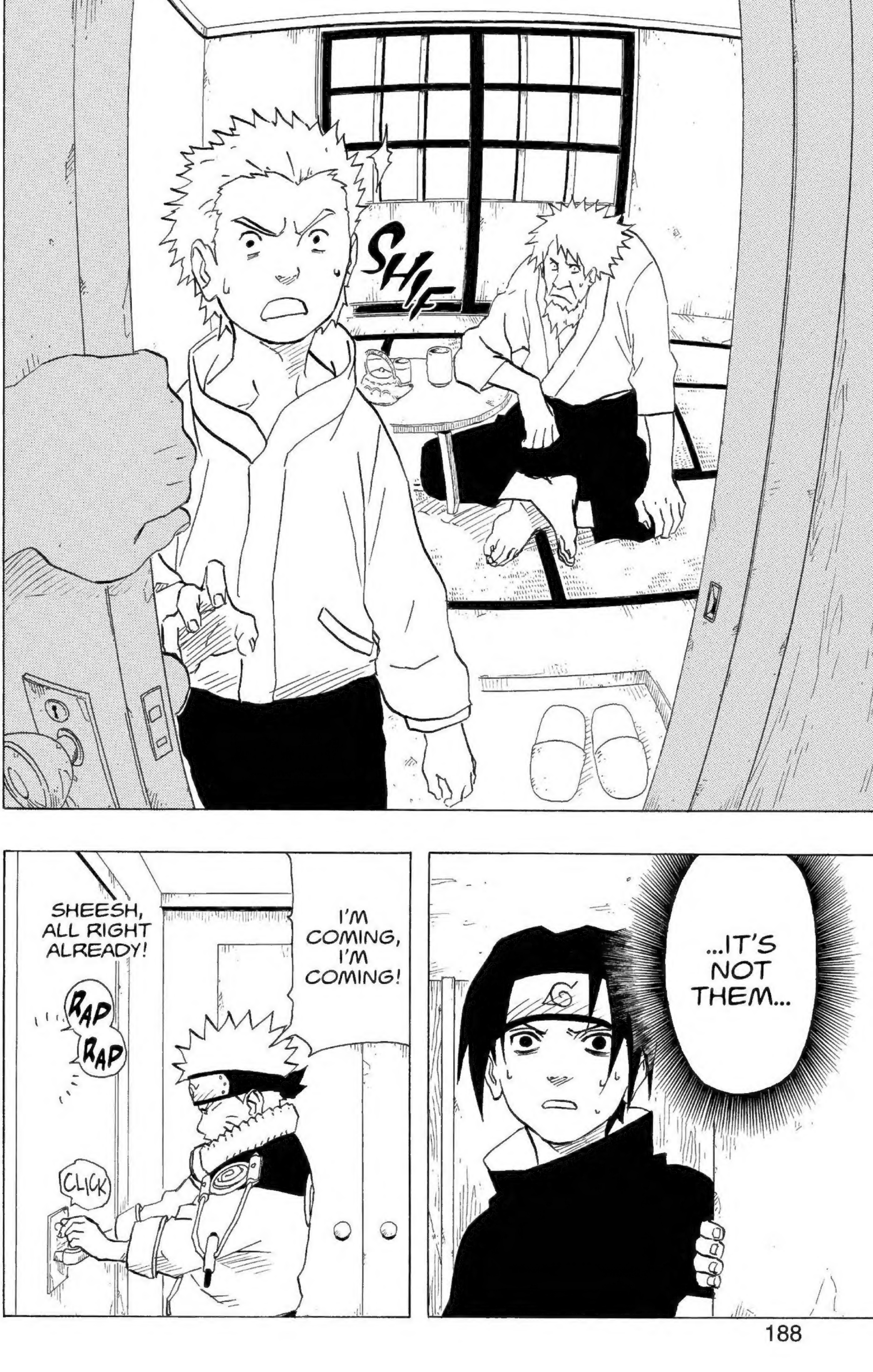

FAF
CLICK
CLICK
WHOA!!
LOOK AT HER!!
NARUTO!
HUH?!
CLOP
CLOP
HERE, HERE'S OUR ROOM KEY!
GO UP TO THE ROOM AND PRACTICE MANIPULATING YOUR CHAKRA! EH!
PLINK
SLAP
WHAT?!
YOU CAN'T DRAG ME HERE AND THEN JUST LEAVE ME!!

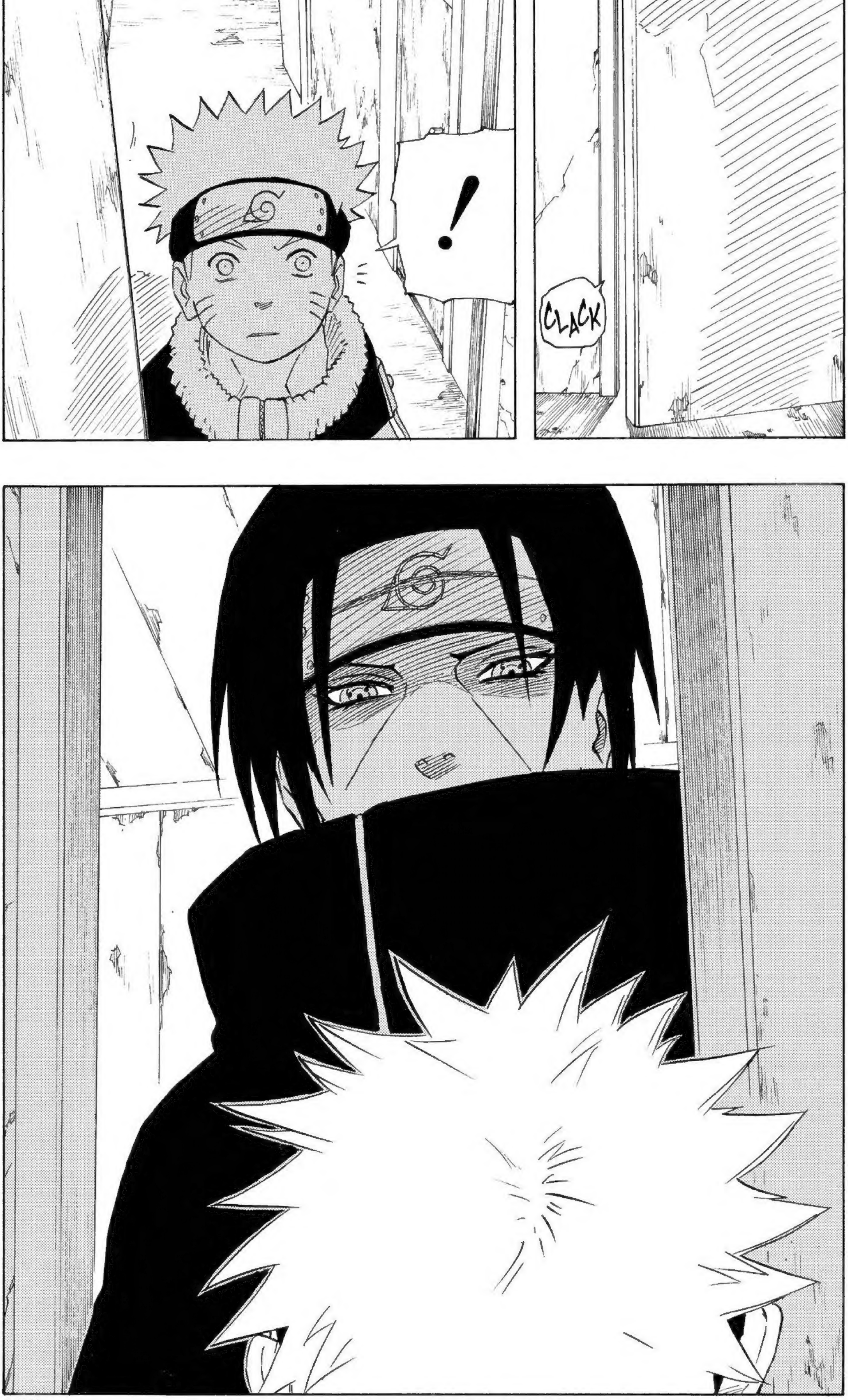

THAT CITY'S NOT THAT FAR AWAY...!
SHEESH! THAT PERVY SAGE, HE'S ALWAYS LEAVING ME HANGING!!
HE BETTER BE SERIOUS ABOUT SUPERVISING MY TRAINING...?!!
FEH...!
SO MANY INNS! DO I JUST HAVE TO KNOCK ON EVERY DOOR?!
CRUNCH
宿
宿
酒宿
フロント
!
HEY, IS THERE A FOOL-FACED BLONDIE ABOUT MY AGE...
...AND A WHITE-HAIRED BIG GUY STAYING HERE?!
...HMM.

(Forehead: Haku Hatsu Chun, or White Green Center which is a Mah Jong tile formation.)

READ THIS WAY


AAH! I WONDER IF IT COULD BE THEM... YES, I BELIEVE SO.
SHP
WHICH ROOM NUMBER ?!
!
RAP RAP
RAP RAP
WHAT, COMING HOME REJECTED ALREADY?
RAP RAP
SHFF
SHLEP SHLEP
CLACK
DAK
NARUTO!


SHIF
...IT'S NOT THEM...
I'M COMING, I'M COMING!
SHEESH, ALL RIGHT ALREADY!
RAP
RAP
CLICK



TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOL. 17!